

Maelstrom Twins

Disclaimer: I do not own any characters except the ones I made up and some things that are in this plot. I don't own Harry Potter, its plot or its characters. I wish I did though... Me no ownie!

Pairing/s: LupinTonks, DumbledoreMinerva, RonHermione, Harry(Harrison)Ginny

Warning/s: AU, Child-neglect, child abuse (by Dursleys) extreme action, James and Lily are alive, Sirius not in Azkaban, slightly manipulative (but redeemable) Dumbledore, angst, violence, some blood and (some) humor. (Also some extreme prats who're to be totally hated throughout this entire fanfiction!)

Original A/N: Hey peoples! I'm writing yet another fic! Isn't this wonderful? I would update my Naruto fic but my computer had a saving error and totally deleted the entire second chapter, so I have to re-type that... Dangit... Anyways, this fic is a Harry had siblings who one of them was mistaken to be the Boy-Who-Lived, when it was really Harry, so enjoy. AND REVIEW!

NEW NOTE: Yes, I'm editing again. I had to fix the obviously HUGE plot holes that I've been seeing in these early chapters. Here's the new and improved prologue! WOO! =)

Prologue

? 's POV...

A Halloween night on Godric's hollow, all was silent, all was still.

A locked cottage home, current home to one Lily and James Potter and their three children, happened to be on that street.

A set of triplets, yet they all couldn't have been more different from each other, all born on July 31st.

One Harrison James Potter, or Harry as he was nicknamed, with his brilliant emerald eyes and messy black hair tufted on his tiny head, was the youngest of the three. Always a happy baby, who hardly ever cried, he often seemed like a very thoughtful baby as well.

Instead of crying to be fed he'd open and close his mouth repeatedly. That was pretty impressive, for a one-year old.

Hayden Godric Potter, with his mother's red hair and his eyes a mirror of his father's hazel, was by far the loudest and most demanding of the three. Almost constantly he would cry for attention, the middle child was a right blighter of a one-year old when he wanted to be. He was also prone to screaming, very, very, very loudly.

Then there was the oldest, Harrietta Noelle Potter. She was an entire hour older than Harry, a half hour from Hayden. You'd expect her to be an almost baby stereotype, a happy baby, a bratty baby, but no she was by far strange, in both looks and personality. Her hair, a ghostly shade of white and her emerald flecked eyes clouded by grey. Not only was she deemed unfortunate enough to inherit her Father's bad vision, but also stuck with a case of half-blindness, a common birth defect found in people with albinism.

Always quiet, from the moment she was born, she hadn't made a single noise. Not a burble, a squeak, nor a gurgle, hey that rhymes. They were starting to assume that she was mute or something.

As to the matter of her name, well there's a funny story behind that, there had been a bit of a mix-up concerning her birth certificate, a magical birth certificate. Both James and Lily had engaged in a combat of the ages, deciding their daughter's names. It was actually quite funny, though she was the oldest she had gotten her name last.

Anyways, back the circumstances surrounding her name, Lily wanted to name her Harriet, while James wanted to name their daughter Henrietta. This went on for a few more than half an hour, and the nurse (recently hired might I add) wrote, 'Harrietta', combining the two names which could only be considered within her mind. But then one Sirius Black suggested the name Noelle, the parents loved it, too little too late though. Their daughter was already cursed with the name Harrietta, all thanks to that stupid noob nurse. So Noelle became her middle name instead, they didn't have as much time to change the name due to Moldy Voldy still walking 'round.

I felt a smile curl as I watched the cottage closely. I heard multiple cracks of apparation, I snickered, looks like the Dark Lord showed up to the party...

I watched with mounting anticipation as spells flew, Voldemort entered the house and James Potter dueled him fiercely. It would probably go down in history as what most pathetic excuses for wizards would call an 'epic battle'. With the sheer amount of spells flying about it was a wonder in itself that Auror Potter could find room in that house to dodge. I giggled a bit as I sensed a bludgeoning hex skimmed past Auror Potter's head, just barely.

Just the thought of the gory mess Auror Potter's head would've been, had he not dodged the spell, brought a gleeful cheer upon my face...

If there was anything that these lesser beings were good for, it was entertainment. They could fight and kill each other in the most entertaining of ways, and they constantly search for more methods to kill each other. And with them screwing like uncontrollable rabbits in heat, there would always be replacements for the dead contenders. Frankly, I think the Romans had the right idea with the Gladiators and the coliseums...

Helping them would be the 'right thing to do', but then again, this show is much more entertaining from this standpoint...

I heard the female's voice, spell after spell, until she was finally pinned down with a shattered leg and shoulder, barely a two feet from her three children's cribs; Auror Potter lay in a magically induced unconsciousness in the broken remains of the cottage stairs...

'Ah,' I thought to myself knowingly, 'I get it, Voldie wants to see the emotional wreck Auror Potter'll be when he sees his family dead... Clever...'

Then came the voice of Lilly Potter.

"Please, not my children, not them..."

I resisted the urge to laugh, pathetic woman. Did she really think that ol' Moldy Shorts would take such a request? Hah, the old tosser

would sooner 'crucio' them, than spare them. It was truly a ditch-pathetic attempt really...

OOOOO

Roughly twenty minutes later I stared at a burning house with barely concealed glee.

Never knew that history was so much fun to watch...

I waved my hand, calling upon my magic as it came to me obediently. I stood as a shadow over the three children through an open window.

I looked down at them, my cattish pupils glinting like they always do, babies are so cute, so innocent...

It makes ruining their lives all the more entertaining.

I felt the incantation complete itself, and heard faint footsteps of two people approaching the half-collapsed room. I immediately left my perch and stood out in the street with my own notice-me-not charm safely concealing my presence.

I watched the children found and carried away.

By one Remus Lupin, and Sirius Black.

'Haven't heard those names in a while,' I thought to myself.

I called the leftover magic that seemed to surround the Potter safe house, and absorbed it greedily.

I smirked, these wizards won't know what hit them.

So with that I disappeared, with a resounding 'crack' ringing into the night...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

At Hogwarts...

It took a while, but eventually the Potters had made their way to Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry after being checked over and released from St. Mungos. Dumbledore would make a determination.

I watched them, the Headmaster especially, for any sign that he knew of my presence.

No one knows I'm here.

I had long surpassed that old fool years ago anyhow, not one of these flyspeck witches and wizards within this room can beat me, not a one.

Things are almost too easy! I watched the Headmaster cast multiple spells on the three one year old infants. And the middle child had begun to glow gold.

I resisted the urge to cackle, again. (I should really get that fixed... Then again the last therapist was beheaded for insulting my greatness... Heh, heh...)

"Your son was the one whom vanquished Voldemort." The Headmaster stated, "he was the child of prophecy."

I let a slow smile crease my features, as I cast my charms all around the room, which was already thick with the magical residue from the Headmaster's previously cast spells.

Working on a subconscious level is often difficult and most attempts to do magic on that level often results in the targets' and the user's mental deterioration. Lucky me I can do this just fine...

I ignored the rest of the conversation as I had already heard the phrase I had wanted to hear.

"Hayden Godric Potter is the Boy-Who-Lived."

Words, words that sealed this world's fate.

'Heralding a new age,' I thought, 'You herald a new age, little ones,' I took another look at their toddler faces as Lily Potter held them.

I transformed into one of my, ahem, acquired animal forms, and slipped behind to furniture. I found a mousehole in which to slip through.

I took one last look at the people in the room, and felt the animal version of a sneer cross my furry snout.

I nodded my head in mock respect.

'Thank you Headmaster, wizards of the so-called light, you bunch of hypocrites, I could've never done this without you.'

So I turned and darted into the inky blackness of Hogwarts' walls.

When I reached the outside I saw the heralding dawn.

'A new dawn, a new age, a new leader,' I darted forward, switching forms instantly into my shadow coyote form. To herald the coming age of chaos and darkness that I will spread.

'An Age of Darkness and Chaos.' I thought once again with a joyful smile, 'I've got some work to do.' Then I felt my familiar cruel smile adorn my features, I shifted back into my human form, and disappeared.

Towards my destiny, of heralding this worlds' destruction.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

? 's POV...

I stood and watched the other figure dissapparate, judging by his expression, I am too late to stop him.

Regret weighs heavily upon me, not just for my recent failing, but all of them.

I pushed down the welling grief as I realized that I would not be able to prevent many atrocities from taking place as I had hoped.

What's the damn point of a second chance when you fail anyways?

Why?

I have to fix the damage he has caused, but I will need patience...

As I watched the occupants of the Headmaster's Office speak, through a window of course, I couldn't help but feel a sort of deep melancholy in my chest.

So many deaths, so much screaming, the pain and suffering I've inflicted on people.

What's worse I enjoyed it.

I shook my head in effort to focus on the matter at hand, I must concentrate! I must concentrate on the matter at hand...

There will be time for melancholy later, I immediately ran off Hogwarts grounds and disappeared.

I landed in a muggle town or city, somewhere in an alley.

It was raining, and thunder roared overhead.

I saw him!

I broke into a full on sprint, my black cloak blowing in the harsh wind.

He ran, then disappeared again.

I turned-!

Suddenly I was on the ground, reeling in searing hot pain as my blood pooled beneath me.

"Someone call 911!" I could hear fuzzy voices in the background.

"What happened to him?"

"I saw! He was struck by lightn-"

Then I lost consciousness, and I knew no more...

A/N: Hello! Yes! Finally! I re-wrote that piece of crap I called a prologue! Thank you for all of your patience! Don't worry I'm half

done with the latest chapter! It'll be out before you know it! Sorry I took so long! My Mom's getting the floors redone and she disconnected the internet from the house or something like that, so I have to use another computer that isn't at my house instead! Which is more difficult since I rarely leave the house! Okay, enough of my endless rambles, please REVIEW! Tell me what you think and here is a poll/vote thingie...

Was this prologue better than the old one?

-Yes or No

Was this more informing of plot and/or etc?

-Yes or No

Was the old prologue better?

-Yes or No

Should I take this version down and put the old one back up?

-Yes or No

Chapter 1: Fifth Birthday

Harrietta's POV...

I've always noticed it. My parents, if you could really call them that, have always loved my little brother Hayden more than me or my youngest brother, Harrison. Or as I like to call him, Harry. I was older than the both of them, Hayden by half a minute I was told, and Harry by two minutes. Today was pretty ordinary, my parents, Lily and James Potter, were yet again fawning over the boy-who-lived. You can probably sense the sarcasm here by now. It was the thirty-first of July, our birthdays, I looked to the breakfast table, three settings.

"Typical..." I huffed bitterly, at a tone that only house-elves could hear. People might wonder how a five year old could possibly be bitter at any point in time until they're more mature to think like that. Then the brat-who-lived came barreling past me, screaming and whining at the top of his lungs about how he didn't want to take a bath, thoroughly interrupting my personal psycho-analysis of myself and my own intelligence. As he came past his hand flailed outwards, towards a cabinet, and a vase.

CRASH!

Then my beloved parents showed up, like clockwork, they proceeded to check Hayden all over for bruises and scratches he might have gotten. He had a vase shard half the size of a muggle thumbtack, he proceeded to scream and wail, while my parents cooed and comforted him. I wasn't even jealous anymore; they hadn't done that when I'd fallen down the stairs a few weeks ago. I had long destroyed that feeling within me, though, I suppose it does surface every once in a while.

They hadn't even noticed when Harry had blown himself out of a tree we were climbing together last summer.

OOOOOOOOOO

Flashback...

Harry and I had been outside playing, not a glimpse of bratty and spoiled Hayden in sight. It was the best, we looked for flowers along

the edge of the trees, and we had found a tall oak tree practically made for climbing, lots of branches close together. We'd climbed up; I'd picked my way to the top, then scared a huge bird that took to the sky in a startled frenzy. In its flight it proceeded to fly right into Harry's face, and he was startled, badly.

Now when I say he was startled, I mean like going in and blowing a muggle air-horn right next to a deer grazing in a previously dead quiet meadow, kind of startled. For a split second I could feel my little brother practically hum with what could only be described as magic. Like when I saw my Father, James show Hayden some of his magic with his wand, only this was much, much bigger than anything my Father had very shown Hayden.

Of course I'd seen my Father do magic, but only because he wanted to show Hayden, not Harry, or me...

Then next thing I knew, Harry had been literally blown out of the tree. Then he landed with a sickening thud to the ground, I remember a tight feeling in my chest, I was frozen for a second or two in simple-minded shock. I was rather childish back then I must admit.

"Harry!" I began hopping down using the branches I had climbed only minutes before, soon I was on the ground and I ran to my little brother's side. I shook him by the shoulders in futile attempt to wake him, he stirred but didn't wake up. I quickly hoisted Harry onto my back and ran back to the manor, through the back door.

"Where are Mom and Dad?" I wondered out loud, half-panicked for Harry. I heard noises in the foyer, I did the only sensible thing, I ran...

As I neared the Foyer, I could hear Hayden whining something about more candy, jumping up and down in a complete hissy fit, like he always does when he doesn't get what he wants within his preferred time-table. Mom and Dad sounded like they were about to leave, they were going to Floo away and then there'd be nobody to help Harry!

"Mum! Dad!" I called, "WAIT!" I could see them at the fireplace, their backs turned. I was three feet from them now, they could ignore Harry and I now. "Mom, Dad, Harry not awake, he blew himself-"

"Not now honey," Mommy said sweetly, "Daddy and I are on a very-tight schedule," Hayden obviously, they never pay attention to Harry, "ask one of the House Elves."

"But Harry's-" I started.

"Sorry, gotta run, oh shit we're late!" Daddy interrupted hurriedly as he tossed a handful of Floo powder into the fireplace and Floo'ed away with Mummy, reprimanding Daddy about his 'language', and Hayden right behind him. For what felt like forever I just stood there.

'Why do they only care about Hayden?' I thought sadly feeling a sharp prickle of pain in my chest, then I shook it off, I thought hard, I didn't know what exactly was wrong with Harry, but if what his breathing sounded like was anything to go by, then he wasn't doing to good. I heard my parents talking about the place they took Hayden to when they thought he was hurt and for his checkups. What was the place called again? St. Jungos? St. Nungos? St. something or other...

"I got it! St. Mungos!" I exclaimed rather loudly, I jumped up and snatched a handful of Floo powder and threw it into the fireplace.

"St. Mungos!" I yelled, and then jumped into the flames...

OOOOOOOOOOOO

At St. Mungos...

The Floo didn't throw me out when Harry and me got there so that was a plus. But I think that I may have used too much of that powder. Though our entrance had gotten the attention of one of the Healer Ladies.

"Oh dear! Where are your par-" She was going to ask about my parents, but I interrupted her.

"My brother fell outta a tree, he's breathin' funny, and he's not wakin' up!" I huffed hurriedly, indicating Harry's unconscious figure, his head resting on my shoulder. Before I knew it, the Healer Lady had taken Harry and began waving her wand and stuffing weird looking potions down Harry throat.

"Where are your parents sweetie?" The Healer Lady asked sweetly. I stared at her, I hated it when people talked at me like I was some invalid or a newborn infant, I was four years old for Christ's sake not four months.

I was about to snap at the lady, but then I remembered what happened when I met other four year olds at the playground, they all acted so immature and idiotic.

'Nobody acted like I did, they could hardly form proper sentences, much less think about the things I do.' I thought logically.

"Um, Mummy and Daddy took Hayden to Diagon Alley; they said dat they'd be out all day." I answered innocently; she began to walk away to firecall my parents. I looked toward my brother, "Uh, Miss Healer Lady?"

"Yes?" She answered.

"What was wrong with Harry?" I wanted to know what happened to my little brother.

"You won't understand much of it dear." She says in the sweet voice again, the same voice that adults use when they're going to shoo you out of the room. She turned to walk away again, like everyone else.

'I'd bet if it were Hayden they'd be all falling over themselves to help him. Mom and Dad would be here too.' I thought with a feeling that didn't sit to good in my stomach.

OOOOOOOO

Later...

Mum and Dad had shown up and were worried and upset, for once. But they weren't as worried as they would be if it were Hayden sitting on that hospital bed.

I eavesdropped on the adults and from what I heard Harry had two broken ribs, a fractured wrist, and a lot of bruises. It was hard to hear though through all the people fawning over Hayden, the oh so

bloody wonderful boy-who-lived. Soon as Harry was stable and was sleeping the injury off, he was forgotten, and so was I.

I truly felt like crying, but I had Harry to watch over. Because, if I didn't...

I felt something rather odd, more than not liking somebody, it was like me feeling sad and jealous of Hayden and how much Mom and Dad loved and doted on him. I couldn't worry about this now! I pushed the feeling to the back of my mind and looked at Harry's sleeping face.

Harry was okay this time. But what about the next? What's gonna happen when nobody can help and our parents don't notice us again?

"Looks like I gotta look out for ya little bro, 'cause if I don't look out for ya," I almost choked up at that point, "then who will?"

End Flashback...

OOOOOOOOOO

I didn't know it back then, but that was the day I first felt hate. Hate was born within me, but I usually pushed it aside. It wasn't that strong, it was usually accompanied by slight jealousy and pain but I pushed it to the back of my head and looked at the scene before me. I was about to walk in the other direction but then...

"SHE PUSHED ME!" Screamed Hayden as he pointed an accusing finger at me. I didn't even bother to protest, it wouldn't do any good anyways.

"Harrietta Noelle Potter to your room, now." James, obviously, Mother always was slightly sweeter about it, not by much though. Now he remembers my name? Hah, I'm cracking up. I turned around and headed toward my room; at least I'll have some peace and quiet there...

OOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

I was in the library reading a book titled "Encyclopedia of Potion Ingredients" that my sister told me to read. When we found it was covered in six layers of dust so obviously it hadn't been read in a while, I sneezed. I'm five years old, a couple months ago my big sister 'Retta taught me how to read. She had white hair, not like the mystic man, who was really old, but more like a moon white color. Her eyes are steel grey, like cold metal, but if ya looked real close you could see tiny flecks of green the same shade as my eyes. I was just reading something about basilisk venom when-

CRASH!

"SHE PUSHED ME!" Screeched Hayden, I couldn't see what was happening but, I knew it. Same old story, Hayden does something, and then heaps the blame on me or Retta, and then we get in loads of trouble with Mommy and Daddy. Then with the swing of the door, Retta walked very quietly into the library.

"Did ya bother goin' ta your room this time?" I asked as she entered the library, quiet like a wraith straight out of a nightmare.

One thing that Retta could do was, no matter what, despite the fact that her hair color and eyes could make her stick out like a sore thumb, she could disappear. Not literally, but she could fade into a crowd and you'll never find her unless she wants to be found. Retta could sneak up on anybody without them even noticing a moon white-haired girl following them. She was just scary like that, one of those people you didn't want to run into in the dark, she'd scare the bejeebers out of anybody, includin' me.

"Mmph." Retta answered simply, I sighed, it was an unwritten agreement between us both to avoid our other brother. The spoiled prat who Mummy and Daddy totally adored, Retta always told me that they adored me too, just not as obviously.

"Hey," I reached into my pocket and pulled out a small package, something I found lying around, "Happy Birthday Retta!" I smiled, she smiled too I think.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Harrietta's POV...

"Leave it to the tyke to remember our birthdays, much less get me something for it." I thought with a smirk, it could I suppose be taken as a smile, but I don't really smile. I took the small package from Harry's outstretched hand, lots of tape, mostly to hold together the old wrapping from some of Hayden's gifts that he tosses away so often, spoiled brat.

I unwrapped the gift; it was a small, blue, crystal butterfly pendant. I wasn't one of those girly-girls so I wouldn't squeal over it. I was never a fan of the color pink or big bows either. I stared at it, then at Harry's face. His expression was hopeful, I wasn't excited about the pendant, but a present is a present.

"Thanks little bro." I smiled, not a huge smile, but a smile none the less. One thing about me, I almost never, ever smile. I have never understood why people plaster these huge smiles on their faces all the time. It gets creepy after a while, I swear. I don't mind people who genuinely smile, but when they've got this fake sweet huge smile plastered on their face all the time, it really irks me to a boiling point.

"Well? Put it on. Let's see how it looks." Harry smiled again, I put the pendant on. I gave him a thumbs up, Harry's gaze returned once more to the book he was reading. He looked almost, what's the word I'm looking for? Resignedly disappointed.

"Don't look so down short-stuff, I got you a gift too, geez." I saw him perk up, Harry's real predictable like that. I tossed him a slightly longish box about nine inches long, it wasn't wrapped though. Never really saw the point in that. Harry looked at it for a few seconds, then pried the lid off.

"A wand!" He looked like he was about to either have a heart attack or leap for joy. Then the joy faded into a look of suspicion, well as suspicious as you could get when you were five years old.

"How'd ya get it?" That look, what does he think I did? It's not like I murdered anyone for it.

"Why are ya lookin' at me like that? I didn't kill anyone for it if that's what you're thinkin'." I responded, raising an eyebrow. (A/N: That is

the way it's termed right? If not tell me when you guys and gals review!)

"Well, how'd ya get it then?" He prodded again, poking me in the arm.

"Appreciate it for pete's sake, it took me forever to sneak into Knockturn Alley to knick that." I huffed, slightly miffed, it really was hard to get him a decent present.

"You stole it?" Harry's eyes were wide.

"Well you don't expect our dear parents to get you anything good do ya?"

"Well they might..." Harry's voice trailed off, he knew as well as I did that we wouldn't get anything from our parents, not a hug, not bedtime stories, not a kiss goodnight, not even our parents' very attention. Personally I was starting to think that we wouldn't even get our parents' love...

"But still, you stole the wand. Whose was it?" Oh great am I gonna get nagged by my little brother about how I was able to get him a birthday present without spending any money whatsoever?

"I didn't pick anyone's pocket." I stated flatly, "I simply went to a shop, and the person that was supposed to be at the register wasn't there so I just took my leave when I found your present, no-one saw me, caught me, or noticed me, all in all I say, mission success."

"But stealin's wrong." Harry pouted slightly.

I wasn't fazed by this. "So? The wand's probably illegal anyways, I read the tag and it said that the wand is for beginners in magic. What better time to start learning than now?"

Harry sighed, hah, I won. "Okay, thanks, I really do 'ppreciate it ya know. But why'd ya have to go to Knockturn Alley?" At least the question's valid.

"Cuz I wanted to get ya something that ya could use. Plus Mom an' Dad are already tryin' ta start Hayden on magic. Well I want us ta be able to do something while they give the boy-who-wouldn't-bloody-

die his special training. We're-" I was about to say something else but Harry cut me off.

"Don't say that 'bout Hayden. It's mean."

I hate it when I'm interrupted; since I hardly talk at all, save to a few people. I only speak when I feel like it, when I need to say something, when I want to get a point across, or something needs to be said. At least that's what I tell myself. My eyebrow twitched, muggle anime-style.

"Okay, sorry 'bout that," I rubbed to back of my head, "but you gotta admit that Mom and Dad are talking about trainin' Hayden with Uncle Dumbledore. They haven't even mentioned us once. They're jus' gonna leave us in the dust if we don't do something."

At that, Harry's face dropped. Not literally but he looked depressed. "I know..."

"Hey," I tapped his shoulder reassuringly, "eventually the fame will die down, and then they'll see us, 'The Potter Twins', greatest witch and wizard to ever walk the plane. Then they'll wonder why they didn't see our talents sooner." I emphasized twins to say that Hayden would be nowhere in the picture.

Harry smiled, "Thanks Retta, you always know what ta say when I feel down." Then he looked thoughtful, "But least we can look forward to Uncle Moony and Uncle Sirius being here today." There he goes, looking on the bright side of things. It seemed that Harry was my opposite in demeanor, him the optimist. Myself being mostly pessimistic, for a five year old anyways.

Wondering where me and Harry learned all these words? How a couple of five years olds can read? Well ever since my brother fell out (blasted more like it!) of that tree, I realized at that moment at St. Mungos that our parents didn't give a hoot about Harry or me. Sad, but true. So painfully true. I decided quickly, that if my parents didn't care for Harry or me then who would? So we'd have to take care of ourselves, no help from adults unless absolutely positively necessary. Since then I asked the House Elves; they really are smarter than people give them credit for; to teach me and Harry how to read, even cook a little bit. Far ahead of Hayden whose already got tutors. Gonna defeat the Dark Lord when he rises me foot. I read

about accidental magic and that's what Harry and I did, more than a few times. Mom and Dad never noticed, ever...

Since we learned how to read, I've been reading every magic and muggle book that I could get my hands on. I've read magical theory, magical and non-magical history, magical spells, dueling books (which I find quite lacking), heck I've even read up to fourth year Hogwarts material. I can't do much in the spell department, neither can Harry, we both don't have wand to practice with. Well Harry had one now but I'm not exactly sure that the practice wand would work. It was from Knockturn Alley, who knows the thing could be charmed to attack you and poke your eyes out.

"Well? Try your present out." I said slightly anxious.

Harry grinned again; if he wasn't my little brother I swear that I would've gotten annoyed. When people smile too much it annoys me greatly. It only doesn't annoy me as long as they are being sincere about why they are smiling. He pulled out the wand and gave it a swish and green and red sparks erupts at the end.

"Whoa..." He breathed.

"Hn." It's a practice wand what does he expect? I sighed quietly, "Look I'll go and see if anyone's here yet for Hayden's party, then I'll swipe something for us to eat 'kay? In the meantime you try doing some of those beginners spells, if the wandwork sucks then we'll go wandless for the next few spells 'kay?"

"Kay," He closed the potions encyclopedia and opened a book for beginner charms. I put on the butterfly pendant on, there was something engraved on the back but I couldn't really make out what it was. I'd check it out later...

Outside of the Potter library it was already crowded. Fans of the boy-who-lived, friends of the family, and the press were there. Oh yes the wonderful press, flashing cameras and endlessly meaningless questions that get published to the public. In short there were a lot of people at the Potter Manor. I could pick out a bunch of people, the Weasley family, Rita Skeeter, Minister Fudge, some random aurors...

'Geez, who isn't here at this party?' I snorted quietly, 'they're all here to celebrate the birthday of the Wizarding world's wonderful savior?' I could see in the corner of the room there was this huge pile of presents way taller than I was, all of them for Hayden I'd bet. Happy birthday to me and Harry too, though I bet that less than ten percent of the people here even know that the boy-who-lived was part of a set of fraternal triplets. None of us looked alike really. I didn't even look like a Potter, no traits whatsoever from my father, and only a few emerald green flecks in my cold grey eyes from my Mother. If it weren't for the fact of my birth certificate at St. Mungos said who my parents were, I would think I was adopted.

I slipped through the crowd, unnoticed. I congratulated myself silently, my hair color makes me stick out like a sore thumb, yet I can pass through crowds completely unnoticed. After some wandering I spotted Uncle Moony and Uncle Sirius through the crowd. I picked my way through the crowd toward them...

"Uncle Sirius, Uncle Moony." I stated tugging at their sleeves lightly. They turned around.

"Shorty!" Uncle Sirius then proceeded to pick me up and whirl me around, making me dizzy.

"Please put me down Uncle Sirius."

"Not scared of heights are you?" He said raising an eyebrow.

"Ya kiddin'?" I snapped; I was not afraid of heights. "'Course not."

"Just joking with you shorty." I gave him the evil eye at that moment, I hate when people call me short.

"Padfoot, stop teasing her." Uncle Moony admonished. I gave him and Uncle Sirius a hug, even though they weren't here all the time, when they were they'd always never forget Harry or me. Uncle Moony looked around, "Hey where's Harry?"

"Yeah, he's in the library." I answered.

"Oh no!" Uncle Sirius groaned, "He's only five. So young, too young and he's already..."

"What?" Uncle Moony and I echoed back to him. What the heck was he going on about now I wonder?

"He's turning into a bookworm!" Uncle Sirius looked as if the world was going to end. I smacked my forehead. Then I tugged on both their sleeves.

"Come on," I started leading them to the library. Uncle Moony was called Moony because it was his nickname back in Hogwarts when he went to school there. I knew why they called him that though, Harry knows too, but Uncle Moony's too nice for us to judge for something that he can't control.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

In the Potter Manor's Library...

Retta's taking a long time. Maybe I should go look for her...

"Harry!" It was Uncle Sirius, led by the sleeve by none other than Retta. There was Uncle Moony too sleeve led too. Both our Uncles swept Retta and me into a hug, Retta was still, uncomfortable. She never was a touchy feely type of person.

"Happy birthday pups." Uncle Siri, I call him that in my head, petted my hair gently, and then proceeded to give me and Retta noogies.

"Uncle Sirius!" I squawked, squirming out of his grip. I tried to flatten my untamable black hair, and failed in doing so.

"That's what you two get for staying in the library while a party's going on. Come get out there an' play with all the other kids." Uncle Sirius said seriously, then gave Retta another noogie. She frowned slightly, only I can really tell what my big sister is really feeling. She's never very emotional so it's hard to tell what she's really feeling, much less figure out what she's thinking.

When I say that that Retta frowned, I mean that her mouth twitched about a millimeter downwards. My thoughts are wandering again...

"Cub, what's this?" Uncle Moony broke that sniggering fit that Uncle Siri was having by holding up the beginners' wand. Oh snap, I forgot to hide it!

"Uh..." I was really scrambling for something to say. "It's a birthday present." I answered simply.

"From who?"

"Retta." Oh dang, I shouldn't have said that!

"Harrietta how'd you get this?" Uncle Moony was looking incredulously at Retta now, oh no she's gonna get in trouble and it's gonna be all my fault...

"Found it." Retta, you're good at not getting in trouble.

"Where?" Oh no, now Uncle Siri wants to know too. Oh boy Retta ya gotta be a real good talker to get outta this one. Though I really don't like lying to Uncle Siri and Uncle Moony...

"The Alley." Retta looked right at Uncle Moony's eyes blankly.

"Diagon Alley?" Uncle Siri questioned.

"Uh, ya, sure." She said cheekily, well cheekily for Retta.

Both our uncles looked shocked, we weren't ever allowed to go to Diagon Alley, especially alone, there could be bad wizards who like to kidnap little children walking around, you never knew really.

Retta stared at them and raised an eyebrow, "What? It l'ked l'ke a good bir'day present f'r mah littsle bro." She smirked a little and added softly, "Pretty darn cheap too..." Retta looked liked she was about to snigger, but she didn't.

"Don't you know that you shouldn't go without a grown-up?," Uncle Moony paused, probably looking for words that he thinks five years old will understand. See Retta and I never let anyone know how smart we are, Retta says it's our secret weapon.

"Please don' tell Mom an' Dad!" I blurted adding my two cents. "I don' wan' Retta to get into trouble!"

"Well, Harrietta you do know that going into the Alley by yourself is dangerous don't you?" Uncle Moony said gently.

"But no-one even noticed me, I got Harry a great present and I did it all by myself." Retta's voice had a hint of pride. But that really was the wrong thing to say at the moment.

"But we need to tell your parents..." Uncle Moony's voice trailed off only to be interrupted by Uncle Siri's.

"But Moony, she's alright isn't she? We don't have to tell, though I think we should tell her that she should never go to Alley alone again, she doesn't have to get in trouble for it. She's only five you know." Inside I did that happy dance, go Uncle Siri! Way to stick to our side!

"Yeah Uncle Moony," I heard myself say, "don't be such a rules-man!"

He looked thoughtful for a moment and after some convincing he agreed to be quiet about my present from Retta. But Uncle Siri had to scan the wand first. Then he and Uncle Moony grinned down at us adoringly.

"We got you two a couple of gifts out there." Uncle Siri jerked his thumb toward the door. Then both our Uncles dragged us out to the party. Though Retta was the only one who was really dragged. Uncle Siri, Uncle Moony and I laughed at that. I think I saw Retta's lips twitch in a barely even noticeable smile.

"Come on!" Uncle Siri said as he dragged Retta away from her book. "There's a whole birthday party waiting for you two out there!" She grabbed the heavy upholstered chair and tried to hang on but was dragged toward the door. It was a funny scene; actually it was one of the few times since the tree incident that Retta's actually acted like a kid. Just having fun like she should be...

'I wish that Retta wasn't so mature,' I thought sadly, 'I think she'd be so much happier that way...'

A/N: Hey peoples! I try to update when I have inspiration I have it now so I'm updating really quick for once. I'll try to update again. Tell

me though; are Harry and Harrietta too mature? If so tell me and I'll die down the smarts a bit. NO FLAMES! Constructive criticism is fine as long as it's not too mean! This story is a major AU that will span from waaaay pre-Hogwarts throughout the entire seven years so get ready for a really, really, really, really long fic. (At least I hope so!) PLZ REVIEW! SEE THAT BUTTON DOWN THERE? Well CLICK ON IT AND TYPE WHAT YA'LL THINK! (I'll get started on my next chapter soon. It'll be a bit though, I'm only allowed on the computer from Thursdays to Sundays so I have limits. I'll try though!)

NOTE! (PLZ READ THIS!): This fic is a Harry has siblings and one of is taken as the BWL but Harry is the real BWL. This story will include angst. I do not like flames; I don't mind constructive criticism as long as it is on how to improve my writing!

RANDOM NOTE: I'm posting and I finished writing this at eleven thirty-four P.M.! My brain LUVS GREAT WHALES!

HAPPY NEWS: My Dad finished his chemo and radiations! YATTA! (*does happy dance*)

Chapter 2: Sweep Kick

Harrietta's POV...

Uncle Sirius dragged me out of the library like one would a sack of potatoes over the shoulder. It was plain embarrassing! Harry sniggered, oh he is so gonna get it when I get down...

"Put me down please." I huffed to Uncle Sirius. He laughed, so did Harry and Uncle Moony. So glad that I was amusing. You can even hear the sarcasm practically dripping forth from my thoughts.

"Not gonna happen shorty." Uncle Sirius said as we left the library. I heard Harry snigger again, I sent him an evil glare; in turn he sniggered even more. Then Harry looked thoughtful for a few moments, and then walked out through the door with Uncle Moony following Uncle Sirius, who still hadn't put me down...

OOOOOOO

Outside Library...

When Uncle Sirius carried me out of the library there was a crowd, talking about pointless things. I heard so many people greeting Hayden a happy Birthday that I was already sick of hearing it.

'No, don't get jealous. Not the time, not the place. This is a party, besides at least I'll get to spend time with my Uncles.' I could not get all jealous now; I didn't want nor like over-attention anyways. It was overrated and it would make me feel claustrophobic anyways.

I looked at Uncle Moony, his expression was thoughtful. Then he saw me looking at him and gestured his head toward the other side of the room where a bunch of other children of differing ages flocked. With them was the celebrant himself, the king of brats, if you looked in a dictionary for the word spoiled you'd find his picture right there, Hayden. My other little brother, closer to my age, ten thousand times louder than I and Harry put together; and he was a complete and utter brat. Yet my parents loved him.

'How could they not?' I thought wryly. I could have laughed, but then again I hardly laugh anyways. Why start now? There's nothing to laugh about anyhow, there never is; at least not often. Come to think

of it, I don't think that I've ever laughed in front of even Uncle Sirius or Uncle Moony. The only person, who has ever even seen me laugh, is Harry.

"Come on, let's go." Harry tugged on my sleeve; he was already going towards the flock of children. I stared for a moment, I'm sure that my expression was a bit blank. But I did follow Harry towards the fans of the boy-who-lived. Then I was stopped by an adult, I didn't know who she was though.

"Hello dear, what's your name?" She was then looked elsewhere, only stopping to notice my moon white hair. I almost said something in my so-quiet –that-it-sounds-almost-non-existent voice, but she interrupted me. "Have you seen the boy-who-lived?"

My expression darkened, I almost sneered. Like anyone would say hello to me anyways, they just want to know where the prat is. I felt a small twinge in my chest, then I pushed the feeling away; and pointed toward the gaggle of children across the room. The woman left without even a thank you and greeted Hayden a jubilant Happy Birthday. Then I saw Harry near the food table, so he wasn't playing with the other kids after all.

'I'm not surprised.' I thought sarcastically. Then I followed Harry, flanking him like a ghost guardian. I could feel our Uncles watching over us, their thoughtful gazes behind us. It comforted me; I felt something akin to happy, but not exactly. Man this was going to a long birthday...

OOOOOOO

Remus's POV...

When I look at James and Lily's children I see different things. When I see Harry, I see a quiet yet happy child. The three siblings are only five yet all three are different as night and day. Harry and Harrietta are bookish, at five years old. I didn't even know that they knew how to read yet, because as far as I know Hayden can't read yet.

When I see Hayden I see a bubbly typical five-year old who gets everything that he wants. No matter how inconvenient or how ridiculous. More outgoing and more attention demanding than his two siblings put together. Then there's Harrietta...

When I look at Harrietta, I hardly even see a child; she's quieter than even Harry. Never talks to anyone but Harry, Sirius, and I. She'll stare at people and everything around her; then she'll follow Harry around like a guard dog. Harrietta's protective of Harry, like the people she sees are going to jump out and attack him or something.

Yet what's more troubling is the fact that she's only five years old, yet she needed to be told to play.

She's always quiet and avoids people with a passion, so much so that I could describe her as introverted.

She'd rather spend time reading a book than play, though I do encourage reading, she does almost nothing else.

When Sirius and I visited last we asked James and Lily where she was. Harry was in the same room so we didn't have to ask about him. I remember that James and Lily didn't even know where she was, then the conversation was interrupted by a scream from Hayden...

Then I noticed Harrietta looking at me, I gestured my head toward the group of children playing and talking on the other side of the room. Her expression was blank and flat. Her face was so devoid of emotion that it would have made an expert poker player jealous.

"She's too serious," Padfoot's expression hardly resembled the happy-go-lucky one he had been wearing mere seconds ago, "she's only five yet she hangs around Harry like his personal guard dog, she should be playing like any other five year old."

"Well Paddy, maybe we could ask James and Lily?" I offered, though I really wouldn't count on it. If you asked those two something about Hayden they would answer in a heartbeat without hesitation. If you asked them about Harry or Harrietta, they'd hesitate as if thinking very, very hard.

Sirius snorted, "Well there's Prongs now."

"Moony! Padfoot!" James greeted warmly, with a grin that only Prongs could ever wear...

OOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

"Mmm, this chicken's great ain't it Retta?" I chewed on the fried chicken from the table. It was obviously Kaddie's cooking. Kaddie was one of the older House Elves at the house, she was actually the same House Elf who taught Retta to read, and in turn Retta taught me. "Retta?"

She didn't face me but her eyes moved to look at me, "Hn?" (A/N: Hello Sasuke is that you? ... Sorry, couldn't resist... -eyebrow twitch-What?)

"Why ya so quiet?" She looked blank as ever. "Come on, something's wrong. I can tell."

"So?" She rasped in her wraith-like whispery voice, she doesn't like parties for some reason. Well I don't like the crowds but Retta never specified.

"You're quieter than usual." I said.

"I'm always quiet." She mumbled looking around.

"Not when no-one listens." I retorted. She gave me a slightly defeated look, though to anyone who's never met Retta before, her expression would show total blankness of emotions. None, nadda, zip, zilch, absolute zero.

"Fine." She huffed, her shoulders dropping ever so slightly. "I got a weird feeling."

"Again?" Another thing Retta about was that she had this weird ability to sense when bad things were about to happen or maybe that's just her negativity talking. She found some of Mommy's muggle books so she often goes by them or quote them.

She inclined her head subtly, "Something wicked this way comes." Her gaze met mine, "Today's not gonna end well..." I shivered; I hoped she was wrong this time, though chances of that were...

I gulped, 'Slim to none...'

"Let's get outta here before-" Retta started. Then Hayden, my older brother by two minutes, made the scene. I wanted to smack my forehead as I thought, "something even more wicked this way comes, this is not gonna end well..."

"Eh tiny!" Hayden then pushed me down, Retta stared at him, well more like glared. When Retta glares at you, it's like having ice demon stare you down. She doesn't look like she mad or anything, but when she glares at you...

It gave me the creeps, and she's never even glared at me...

Hayden cocked an eyebrow, "What do ye wan' ghos'?" He teased venomously. Retta continued to stare, keeping her face utterly blank. Then Retta helped me up, ignoring Hayden completely.

'Maybe Retta shouldn't a done that...' I thought as I brushed myself off. I noticed that I had dropped my half-eaten fried chicken when Hayden pushed me, dang and I didn't even get breakfast today...

"Don' ignor' me!" Hayden hissed angrily as he shoved Retta back. The adults were so blissfully unaware of this entire incident. Pfft, typical...

"Hey, Hayden." Piped one of Hayden's fans, "Why ya pushin' her 'round anyways?"

'Hayden you are such a bully in my book.' I thought angrily.

"Hmmp." Hayden crossed his arms and looked bratily; I have made a word up just for him; at the boy who protested his bullying. He had brown hair and looked a bit on the chubby side(guess who), though not nearly as much as Hayden was becoming. Then the protester looked down, and mumbled something. Well at least he tried...

Retta stared. She had that look again. Then acting out that Kung Fu movie move we saw when Mom and Dad forgot us on a trip to London, Retta sweep kicked Hayden's feet right out from under him. Uhg, bad idea...

"HARRIETTA POTTER!" Oh no, that was Dad. He was furious, and really, really scary. Retta's face was blank as ever, then as if I

thought things couldn't get any worse for my big sister, Hayden was crying.

Well, wailing like the muggle sirens Retta and I heard in Muggle London. Dad was ranting again, clearly angry at Retta, well I tried to step up to my big sister's defense but he started berating me too. I sighed softly, I suppose the peace was short-lived. Retta was right we should've stayed in the library where there was no trouble. Today was not ending well, and it was only twelve noon...

OOOOOOOOO

Harrietta's POV...

As if today was bad enough. Now "father" was mad at me. All I did was give that prat his just desserts!

Though I think that the decision was stupid, rash, and well there really is too many consequences that go with it really... My father was yelling really, then he stopped and went to comfort Hayden. I sneered mentally, what's to be expected from the parents of the boy who lived? Soon Mom was there too, doing the same. Then I became aware of all the eyes on me, then they focused on Hayden again.

Their damn precious birthday boy, well they can have the brat! I stalked over to Harry's side and nodded my head towards the library. But Harry wanted to eat more so he went to the table with all the food, most of it was good. Harry said that he'd snag me a plate too, I'm gonna thank him later. Some of the House Elves best cooking was on that table, I'm definitely gonna thank them later...

Recalling the kung fu move I'd used on Hayden a mere minute ago, I remembered how I learned it...

Flashback...

Mom and Dad were taking us through muggle London. Then Harry and I say a stand with books and things called comics. We went to look at them then I heard (and ignored) Hayden scream that he wanted to get candy. Five minutes later me and Harry looked around for Mom and Dad, they were nowhere in sight. Harry got scared and

clung to my arm like I was going to disappear in a puff of smoke as we walked through the crowds of people in the streets of London.

Hours Later...

There was neither hide nor tail of Mom or Dad. It felt as if me and Harry were all alone in this world, there were no familiar faces or anybody for that matter. It was already dark and it looked like it was going to rain sometime soon. Then as if karma was completely against Harry and me it began to rain, and as they say when it rains it pours, today that saying could be taken quite literally. Harry and me were completely soaked to the bone within that span of ten seconds. Then Harry sneezed, great, I really prayed that he wouldn't get sick...

Then we heard sounds coming from an abandoned building, at least we thought it was abandoned. Through the sheets of pouring rain we could barely even see what was in front of our own faces. We found the building because I smacked right into the front door. Then a loud, booming voice shouted its existence.

"AMAZING! The Rookie has won yet ANOTHER round! Can this underdog actually have what it takes to win the tournament?" The voice was so loud that me and Harry had to cover our ears. We were in a long hallway, the cheering and screaming was coming from the other end leading deeper into the building. Harry and me were curious about what all the cheering and screaming was all about, so we headed towards the lighted end of the hallway. Then the world burst into light...

There was a huge room, well not really a room, more like a stadium. There was bleachers nearer to the walls where at least five hundred people were cheering and literally going wild. In the middle of the room there was an arena with two people fighting in it.

The first man was mostly made up with huge bulky muscles that made you wanna just run outta the room. All in all if you got hit by one of his punches, you're gonna be feelin' that one for a week.

The second man was skinny, and more agile looking. But you could see the muscle on the guy though, the way he was fighting you could see that he depended on the speed of his strikes. Both

fighters moved with their own style of fighting. I didn't know it at the time but they were in a kung fu match, tiger-style versus snake-style.

The exchange of blows was a real awe-inspiring sight to see. The skinny fighter dodged every one of the bulkier man's punches and kicks. Then after two minutes of punching, striking and dodging the bulky man hit the skinnier man right in the gut and sent him flying into a wall. Then the almost victor walked up to the fallen opponent to knock him out then suddenly the skinnier man had caught his breath and pointed over the bulky man's shoulder.

"LOOK A DISTRACTION!" He yelled loudly sounding like it was a python or something. Then predictably his opponent looked, I snickered mentally. I promised myself to remember that trick, then the skinny man was in a crouching position, then within a blink of an eye he spun around low to the ground and kicked out one of his legs. Then the bulky man was literally swept off of his feet. On the way down he hit his head and was knocked unconscious.

"Ladies and gentleman!" The person on the muggle speaker crowed with enthusiasm, "Through unorthodox methods, with all the odds stacked up against him, the rookie has WON!" At this the crowd went even crazier, I swear I think that I saw some of them foaming at the mouth. Harry and I were dry now, though still cold and the storm had long ended. We went outside and wandered around for a while then Uncle Sirius and Uncle Moony found us and took us back to Potter Manor. But as we left London, I couldn't help but think of how the skinny not so strong man beat the huge guy because of that kick and the 'distraction'. I would remember that move. Who knows when I'll need it?

End Flashback...

My walk down memory lane was interrupted when I accidentally walked into someone. He had a scowl that would scare the pants off of seventeen year olds, and normal five year olds would be no exception. But then again I was no normal five year old, I was Harrietta Noelle Potter and I didn't back down to anybody, or at least I wouldn't show that I was. I had to respond to the mental challenge that I felt was presented, (plus I was bored out of my mind) I glared at him.

One time Harry told me that when I glare at people he can feel a chill go down his spine, and I don't even glare at Harry. Was my glare really that scary? Oh well all the better to scare people off with, I smirked inwardly at that thought...

OOOOOOO

Third Person POV...

To say one thing about the day, Severus Snape was not a happy man. He's sometimes happy, if you could call it that, but today was not one of those days. He was requested (more like forced, courtesy of a meddling old coot who just knew how to talk people into things) to attend the fifth birthday bash for the brat-who-lived, one of the Potter spawn. Then a mere thirty minutes into the party, the brat-who-lived pushed the boy who looked like the spitting image of James, bloody, Potter. Then the brat started taunting the odd white-haired girl who ignored him and helped up the James Potter look-alike to his feet.

'Bunch of snot-nosed brats.' Thought Professor Snape venomously. Then the white-haired girl sweep kicked the red-haired Potter boy right off his feet, then he began to wail. Gaining the attention of nearly (if not all) the people in the room. Then Potter Sr. decided to show up, as if Severus's day couldn't get any worse...

"HARRIETTA POTTER!" Potter Sr. yelled angrily, then ranted about how Harrietta should be looking out for her little brother and all that. At the name Severus almost choked on the drink he happened to be disdainfully sipping. The sullen, quiet (almost wraith-like) girl was a Potter? She didn't even look like either of her parents.

'At least the world isn't cursed with another Potter look-alike.' Snape mentally sneered. Then both Lily and James, (and a few other people) went to comfort the wailing boy-who-lived. Throughout the entire party, Severus was utterly filled with either boredom or loathing for his worst enemy. Being a master at Legimens, he could've known what she was thinking as she walked to leave the room. But he didn't, though through his observation skills he could see the white-haired Potter's mouth twitch ever-so-slightly downward. At this point the entire scene seemed to have lost Severus's interest, then thirty seconds later someone walked into him. He gave a

trademark scowl that would've made a seventh year cry, but to his slight shock the five year old glared at him.

Severus Snape had seen many things in his life, lots of them would make an Auror scream and head for the hills, so he thought nothing could ever faze him. But when he saw that chilling glare, he could have sworn that he felt an ever-so-slight chill go down his spine. It was just, when you think about it, what five-year old really knows how to glare and look like they mean it? Normal five year olds are too happy-go-lucky for that.

"Watch where you're going brat!" Severus snarled angrily. The girl's glare faded back into a completely flat and emotionless expression that would've made a professional poker player green with jealousy.

"Sorry sir, I wasn't watching where I was going. I apologize for my lack of presence of mind." The Potter girl's tone held no emotion, it seemed to have this ice-like feel that it gave off.

'Wait a minute,' Severus thought, 'five year olds, especially a brat of Potter's,' he almost sneered his disgust, 'aren't supposed to apologize.' Through this train of thought he had a bitter remark or two to say in response, but Harrietta beat him to the punch.

"You don' wanna be here do ya?" In Harrietta's mind, she faded back into her "normal" five year old vocabulary. Because she mentally smacked her forehead when she apologized waayy too maturely for a five-year old.

"No," Snape scowled again. "Whatever gave your that idea brat?" He finished practically snarling in a voice that would've sent seventh years running crying for their mummies. Harrietta was unfazed by this.

"part from the fact tha' ya been here scowlin' every few thirty secon's?" She retorted, again without betraying any emotion on her face or in her voice. Severus Snape, if he hadn't had his own share of surprises in his life he may have shown that he was surprised. But at the moment the comment was infuriating to him. He was going to retort with an insult that he was sure would've sent the infuriating brat scurrying, but again Harrietta beat him to the punch.

"Ya don' wanna be here, ya don' like the celebrant either, when no-one's looking trip the brat for me." Then she walked away with her hands in her pockets, towards the library. "I'd do it myself bu' 'm grounded 'lready." The serious/not serious comment kind of blindsided the brooding professor for a moment. Then without waiting for a rebuttal Harrietta had left the room, unnoticed by the crowd of Hayden-fans.

'Annoying brat!' Snape immediately went into a slightly worse mood after, that though it wasn't as bad as usual.

Harrietta's POV...

'Wonder why I talked to that guy?' I thought to myself. I hardly talk to anyone, ever. Oh well, at least there are some pessimists in this world to keep the optimists from running the world into the ground with all their big ideas. It's also nice knowing that not everyone was enthralled by the brat-who-lived, who happened to be my spoiled little brother. In the Library I saw the wand that I had given Harry and immediately hid it. Can't have our parents finding out about it then taking it away or giving it to Hayden...

Yeah, I really hope that scowling dude trips my brother for me...

A/N: Hey peoples! I'm updating! I took so long because the computer keeps deleting my files! It sux! The computer is evil! EVIL I TELL YA! anywho plz review! I want 2 know did I write Snpe in character? Or is he too OOC? If so plz tell me what i did wrong so I can fix it for later chaps. By the way, Snape will not be a pedophile! I do not write pedophiles! Except 4 random no-depth characters that are introduced and killed within the span of one chapter. I am clearing this up before people even start saying stuff like that. This is not a Severitus fic. I love reading those but this fic will sadly not be a Severitus or Sevitus fic. So people I say now REVIEW! I LIVE off of reviews! As I said/tiped before my muse is motivated to write more when people review more often. Therefore the more you (the readers) review, the more I'll update! The only delays I will ever have are as follows: schoolwork(Damn evil things), my science project which is due in two weeks(which I haven't even started yet!), writer's block, and the computer deleting my files(again!). So plz tell me what ya'll think. Oh and Dumbledore is not overtly manipulative, he's a good guy and for the Light and all that rot. But he just sometimes intervenes in things that are better off running their

course, and he is a grandfatherly figure to a lot of people so I do NOT appreciate people turning Dumbledore cruel and evil! Again I say that DUMBLEDORE IS NOT GAY! He totally hits on Minerva and that's proof enough! Last thing to ramble about, in the last chapters I might have misspelled Harrietta's middle name, it's Noelle, not Noel(sorry peoples -sweatdrops-). Okay before Rose hits me with a frying pan for rambling tell me what ya'll think and I don't mind some slight suggestion for the plot either that I will take into consideration,(though I have already planned most of the preHogwarts stuff, but I seriously wouldn't mind some readers' input!). JUST REVIEW PEOPLE! MY DAD EATS SOCKS! RAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Chapter 3: Don't You Love Us?

Harrietta's POV...

I was in the library again. I sat on the red upholstery chair that I had clung to when Uncle Sirius had dragged me out of the library, reading. More specifically I was reading an old Hogwarts textbook on transfiguration, but soon I got bored with the material. Straight up and foreward as usual, not much to chew on really though it would be useful to be able to do all that stuff. But seriously who needs to turn a matchstick into a needle? Where's that ever going to apply to life? I snorted softly at the thought. I closed the transfiguration book and put it back to its shelf, and looked for another book.

'Boring, boring, even more boring than the last...' I paused, was there anything in this library that could hold any of my interest whatsoever? Then I saw the book that Harry had been reading earlier, a book titled '1000 and 1 Potions Ingredients and How to Brew Them.'

'Interesting...' I thought as I picked up the book from its resting place. It was already open to a page all about the uses of basilisk venom, well most of them were theories since basilisks were said to be super-rare and usually anyone who saw them were killed by their deathly gazes or their noxious venom. That is if they weren't crushed by the basilisk's jaws first. I mentally snickered when I read that bit.

OOOOOOOOOO

Hours Later...

I had been reading for hours and still no Harry, well either he's having a great time at the party or he's getting bullied by Hayden and some creeps who'd back him up. That's just my utter pessimism talking though, pay no heed. Then I heard everyone starting to sing the 'Happy Birthday' song so I went out to see where Harry was. I was already as good as grounded as far as the 'Sweep Kick' incident. I sighed, just great...

"Hey Retta," Harry sidled up to me while they were still singing, "I looked through the presents, its the usual." I, of course, knew what this meant. It meant that almost all, like 99.8 percent of the presents

were all addressed to Hayden. I rolled my eyes, typical. Though the one odd thing was, Uncle Moony and Uncle Sirius never forget us. Why now I wonder? Don't tell me that they're forgetting us too...

"Retta." Harry was giving me a serious look, what for? I looked at him and merely raised an eyebrow. "Don't lookit me like tha'." Harry sighed in exasperation. "Ya gotta stop thinkin' deep, it's not good for your 'ealth." I felt my mouth twitch upwards in amusement. He was quoting Uncle Sirius now, what a laugh. He noticed my mouth twitch-smile obviously, then he smiled a huge, easy grin. Then the whole crowd burst into applause, the brat-who-lived had blown out his birthday candles.

"Now what are you two doing here being all mopey by yourselves?" Came a familiar voice, I knew that voice.

"Uncle Sirius!" Harry practically tackled our uncle in a bear hug. Uncle Sirius grinned, then he grabbed my hand and dragged me off to find Uncle Moony. All I could think of was,

'Gah, I hate being manhandled...'

When we found Uncle Moony, we were well away from the party, to my joy. Seriously, I hate, no hate's too weak a word, I loathe crowds. They make me think about being crushed by a sea of strangers all a good two feet or more taller than I am. We were at the library again to Uncle Sirius's dismay, but soon as we got there both our uncles got out brightly wrapped packages, two of them from each of them. Two presents for Harry and me each. I was ecstatic, they didn't forget. I felt a slight warmth in my chest, a type of bubbly joy, so much so that I felt my mouth twitch upwards a few times, then it curved upwards ever-so-slightly. I watched Harry tear into the brightly wrapped package from Uncle Sirius, it was a box full of chocolate frogs from the Honeydukes shop.

Uncle Moony's present to Harry was a kids story book. Harry was happy, yeah maybe this wasn't so bad after all...

Then I turned my attention to my unopened presents, I didn't know which one to open first. But I ended up picking the present from Uncle Moony first, I tore the wrapping off the brightly wrapped package. I opened the box, it was a set of different colored hair ribbons and hair clips. I stole a glance at Uncle Moony's face, he

wasn't making fun of me was he? I was thinking a myriad of thoughts when I was snapped out of it by what Uncle Moony said next.

"So that you can always look pretty." Uncle Moony smiled warmly. Uncle Sirius grinned, then burst into guffaws of laughter, then handed me his present. I rolled my eyes at him and took the box, it had a box of chocolate frogs like Harry's and a pack of exploding snap cards.

"Sirius!" Uncle Moony whacked him upside the head, then went on about how Uncle Sirius shouldn't be giving me a dangerous gift.

"Only you Moony, would call a pack of exploding snap cards, dangerous!" Uncle Sirius retorted in a joking manner, when was he ever like his name? Serious...

'Good lord that was such a cheesy pun...' I thought as I picked up a chocolate frog, I watched it hop around then I bit its head off. I love chocolate...

"Retta," Harry whispered, "Let's eat all the chocolate frogs so we can get all the cards..." Then he put a chocolate frog into his mouth, and soon a chocolate frog eating contest was started. Whilst both our Uncles were arguing and talking about something, Harry and I were already on our fifth chocolate frogs each. Harry got this determined look in his eyes and stuff two whole chocolate frog into his mouth, oh it was on now. I retaliated by stuffing three chocolate frogs into my mouth chewing then swallowing with a gulp, good lord I love chocolate...

Five minutes later both boxes were empty and we were looking at the cards, I had a few good ones but I think I liked my new 'Salazar Slytherin' card the best whilst Harry liked the 'Clodne' card. Clodne was a bird Animagus and had birds that would heal the sick and that her favorite hobby was flying. Harry hasn't flown yet, not once but he always looks at brooms whenever we pass the shops at Diagon Alley. I felt my mouth twitch, I wasn't so sure of what I was feeling right now. I pushed away the thoughts to be thought about at a later date then turned my attention to the last chocolate frog and promptly bit off its head. I beat Harry at eating all our chocolate frogs, the silent challenge had been won.

Harry pouted childishly, then again we are five. Though I like to think that we are both much more mature than the average five year old you know? Then again is that just me? Then I heard the call for the birthday celebrants to open their gifts on the other side of the door. Uncle Moony and Uncle Sirius then proceeded to drag Harry and me out of the library, well Uncle Moony dragged me, Harry was hiding right behind Uncle Sirius. Right before we left Uncle Sirius noticed the empty chocolate frog boxes.

"You two ate it all already?" Uncle Sirius always sounded like life was one big joke to laugh at, somehow both of my Uncles knew how to make Harry and me smile no matter what. Harry nodded, fingering the cards in his pocket, we had some pretty rare ones too, and we were not gonna let Hayden the brat have 'em. One of the best moments that I really look forward to in my life is the time I get to spend with Harry, Uncle Moony, Uncle Sirius and my parents.

Don't get me wrong I really don't hate my parents per say. But sometimes, well a lot of times, they forget about Harry and me. We get over-shadowed by the boy-who-lived and we fade into the background. But our parents don't always forget, one time I remember Mommy brushing my hair before bed and kissing me goodnight, she did the same for Harry too. It was the few and far between memories like those that gave me hope that someday Mum and Dad will love Harry and me with as much ease as they seem to love Hayden.

As I watched the-brat-who-lived open his presents, I watched Harry. Then my thoughts drifted off to other things as I watched my Mom and Dad look at Hayden with so much pride and joy, just because he was happy...

'Mum, Dad,' I thought hollowly(sp?) 'why can't you look at me like that?'

OOOOOOOOOO

Later...

Soon after Hayden had opened his presents the party began wrapping up and people were going home and the elves were starting to clean up. I saw both my Uncles talking and laughing with Dad over near where Hayden was playing with his new stuff. I get a

lot of info from just listening in on the adults conversation because they don't notice me because they think that I'm just a kid and that I don't know what they're talking about. It's so annoying to know that they think that of me and Harry but it's often times a good thing for me. Otherwise I wouldn't know anything! I even learned why the world loves Hayden so bloody much, all because of them thinking that he made a spell bounce back at a big evil wizard who wanted to rule the world and all that junk. I even learned that Uncle Moony was a werewolf, though I don't see why the world is so mean to them, they only have that problem once every month, that still leaves twenty-eight to thirty days that he's totally normal so I think why the heck? Sometimes I just wish that-

"See ya later pup, don't go making such a stir up 'kay?" Uncle Sirius then gave me a hug, I hate when Uncle Moony and Uncle Sirius leave then it's just Harry and me, but I guess that's not so bad...

"Geez it's late..." Harry yawned next to me, I nodded. We headed to our rooms, and here I am, second door on the right, second floor, my room. On my bed I looked at my presents that I got today, which wasn't much but they were precious all the same...

-A couple packs of exploding snap cards

-A bunch of chocolate frog cards (my favorite being Salazar Slytherin)

-A small set of different colored ribbons and hair clips

-The blue butterfly pendant from Harry

-And a... wait a minute, where in blue blazes did this box come from?

I was immediately torn from my thoughts when I noticed a small ordinary brown box on my windowsill, no wrapping paper just a simple box about the size of my hand. I picked it up and looked at the tag taped to the top.

To Harrietta N. Potter,
To be where you need to be.

-Astrum

'Okay seriously who is this even from?' I thought, 'what's with this thing? What kind of joke is this?' But eventually my curiosity got the better of me and I opened the package. It was a small muggle watch, with odd engravings and single pointer. For some reason it spun wildly, I was about to throw it away but something made me stop, something about the watch just felt 'magical'. I stuffed all my presents into a small blue bag that could fit into my pocket, I put all my most precious stuff there, it had about five sickles in there, along with my baby blanket from when I was really little. I was wearing the pendant under my pajama shirt and I wore the watch on my right wrist. My pajamas were pink with lambs on it, cute but unfortunately I can't really stand hot pink, but it was a light pink that was easy on the eyes. I scrabbled around for my glasses, yeah Harry and I had to wear glasses, at five years old no less, that was really unfair...

Then I heard voices downstairs, so I went and hid near the top of the stairs and listened in...

"-jealous of their brother, maybe you should send them somewhere where they won't feel as if-

"That could be for the best." It was Dad's voice.

"But send them away, with ex-death eaters still roaming around, yet to be caught?" It was Mum, she was... Sticking

up for us? Wait a minute who're they talking about?

"I have a theory," It was the first voice, the Mystic man, Twinkleye, "when Voldemort used the killing curse and it rebounded off of young Hayden, the thing that protected him was your love for your children Lily." Then there was a short silence that followed.

"But what does that have to do with our son surviving the killing curse?" Dad asked, sounding slightly confused.

"Well," Twinkleye began, "Lily you were and are very gifted at charms and you invoked blood magic that now protects your children now. It's connected by blood and it could transfer that protection to anyone who is related to you by blood, therefore do you have any relatives that would be willing to take them in for a few months?"

"Well, there is your sister Lily..." Dad's voice trailed off absent-mindedly.

"Well young Harrison and Harrietta can go there for a few months to feel a bit of normalacy, without their brother's fame over-shadowing them." Twinkle eye concluded for them.

"But she hates magic and so does her husband..." Mum started to say then trailed off.

"Nonsense," I could hear the smile in Twinkle eye's voice from here, "She wouldn't hate her own flesh and blood, besides they are such sweet children..." Old man I know you mean well but this is by far the worst idea that anyone's ever had in this house!

"Then it's settled," declared Dad, "They go to Petunia's for a few months." I heard him get up and walk towards the kitchen. I mentally begged Mom to say something, anything!

'Mom! Say something! Anything! Don't give Harry and me away I promise I'll be good! I'll never sweep kick Hayden as long as I live! Just please, fight for us, you were hesitant about the idea, why don't you say anything dangit? I'll be the best big sister to bother my brothers, PLEASE!'

"I was also thinking that maybe I could set up some beginner magic lessons for Hayden,-" Twinkle eye said something else too, but by then I'd stopped listening and turned around, only to find Harry standing behind me.

His face oddly blank, he was the one who could always wear his heart on his sleeve, but just seeing his face that blank it just wasn't right. Harry and I walked to my room which was the closest to the stairs. Harry was still quiet.

"Harry? You okay?" I murmured, softly placing my hand on his shoulder. In Harry's eyes I could see hurt and sadness, I hated it when Harry felt like that, I hated it when my little brother was in pain. Then he began to sob softly as I gave him a sisterly hug, and he cried into the white hair that was currently resting on my shoulder. Though as I comforted my little brother by ten minutes, I couldn't help but let my thoughts drift off to some of my own hurts too...

'Why don't they love us, like they do Hayden?'

'Why didn't Mum fight for us?'

'Aren't mothers supposed to love their kids?'

'Why don't you care?'

'Why are you giving us away?'

'Are we not worth loving?'

'Why does Hayden always hog up all the love?'

'I want you to both to love Harry and me, why can't you do that?'

'I want you to love Harry.'

'I want you to love me...'

Harry kept sobbing and tears ran down his cheeks, I felt the pain in my chest again, like something was squeezing on my heart from the inside. My heart was breaking, and even though, no matter how bad I wanted to cry, I didn't. I had to stay strong for Harry, because if we didn't have each other, then we had nobody. Yet even as Harry's sobs that tore at my heart and my usually non-existent emotions, I could not find any words to comfort him. And over and over in my head I would ask to nobody in particular, or maybe I was asking anyone who would listen,

'Mum, Dad, why don't you love us?'

A/N: Okay yeah I know I don't update at regular intervals sorry. This dumb computer won't let me use microsoft word, the desktop lags by about ten seconds with everything, did you all know that I had to write this all on a blank uploaded document on fanfic? It was so annoying how my internet kept shorting out! This chap was angst-ful wan't it? Well people plz review Rose(my muse) Lives off of them so plz review they fuel my imagination! I will update as fast as I can because this is the story that I am most inspired to write at this moment! PLZ GIMMIE LOTSA REVIEWS!

Things You will not find in this fic:

- Mpreg
- Slash/Yaoi
- Femslash/Yuri
- Incest (there will be no HarryHarrietta, HarriettaHayden, or HaydenHarry!)
- Too much OOCness
- Corny and overtly cliched plot twists (I'm trying to be as original as possible but I love what I write unless it's some of my terrible early fics that really need work.)
- Pedophiles (unless they are psycho evil dudes who either are villains or they die within the span of 1 chap.)
- Huge generation gap pairings that make no Dang SENSE! (ex= HagridMinerva) I found that somewhere and I'm like what the heck? Where in blue blazes did that come from?
- Pairings that make no sense whatsoever

Great News: My Dad is in remission from lung cancer! WOOOOOOO! Halleluejjah!(sp?) Praise the Lord! Thank you God!

Bad News: My dog Kitty (breed: Shitzu maltese) just recently died of heart complications on December 2, 2008. May he rest in peace and may he be in a better place. (I suppose this is why I'm writing angst at the moment ya know?)

Chapter 4: Welcome to the Cupboard

Harry's POV...

My fifth birthday actually went pretty well for once, came through without a hitch, or so I thought. I was in my room after the party had wrapped up and everyone went home I said goodbye to Uncle Moony and Uncle Sirius then Retta and I went to our rooms. I plopped down and leaned against my bed from sitting on the floor, and spread out my few presents that I'd gotten today...

A Magical Storybook

A practice wand from Harrietta

A bunch of chocolate frog cards (my favorite being Clodne)

And a strange box

'Wait a minute, I didn't get that... What is it?' I picked it up from its resting place on the windowsill. It was brown, unwrapped, and completely ordinary, but there was something weird about it. I can't really put place my finger on it but somehow it felt plain and extraordinary at the same time, did that last thought even make any sense? I picked it up and opened it, I saw the card first about three by two inches in size, plain white. The message read,

To Harrison J. Potter,

Love is found in the strangest of places, but sometimes you don't even have to look for it.

When you find people that love you it's always best to stay in touch, hold on to them, for as long as you can.

-Astrum

The message was written in elegant black letters, like brush strokes on an artist's easel. The parchment was kind of old, but looked nowhere near worse for wear. I peered inside the box, there sat a plain muggle watch, with a single hand spinning wildly in all sorts of directions. I put the watch on, it fit perfectly. My room was farther from the stairs that led down to foyer, I could hear very faint footsteps heading towards the steps, must be Retta, I concluded. So I went out too, then I could hear the voices of Mum, Dad and the

Mystic Man with twinkly eyes? I shuffled closer to Retta, who was so engrossed with listening to what they were talking about downstairs that she didn't notice me. From my new vantage point I could finally hear what Mum and Dad were talking about with the Mystic Man.

"-have a theory," it was the Mystic Man, "when Voldemort used the killing curse and it rebounded off young Hayden, the thing that protected him was your love for your children Lily." Then there was a short silence that followed.

"But what does that have to do with our son surviving the killing curse?" Dad asked, his voice trailing off.

"Well," the Mystic Man began, "Lily you were and are very gifted at charms and you invoked blood magic that now protects your children now. It's connected by blood and it could transfer that protection to anyone who is related to you by blood, therefore do you have any relatives that would be willing to take them in for a few months?" No, he couldn't actually be suggesting...

"Well, there is your sister Lily..." Dad's voice trailed off. No! I didn't want to be given away, I saw Retta curl her hand into a tight fist, her nails digging into her skin, drawing a little blood. But Retta didn't seem to notice, I couldn't see her face, but I could see her digging her nails into the wood flooring.

"Well young Harrison and Harrietta can go there for a few months to feel a bit of normalacy, without their brother's fame over-shadowing them." Mystic Man said with a note of finality.

'Mum and Dad are' I felt a lump form in my throat, 'sending us away?' No... I felt a sob rise in my throat, but I swallowed it and kept listening.

"But she hates magic and so does her husband..." Mum started to say then trailed off.

"Nonsense," I couldn't believe it, Mum fight for us I mentally pleaded. "She wouldn't hate here own flesh and blood, besides they are such sweet children..."

"Then it's settled," declared Dad, "They go to Petunia's for a few months." I couldn't hear anything after that, I felt my face go 'Retta

Blank'. I was vaguely aware of Retta turning around and then we were in her room. Retta looked at me oddly, she had her brave face on, the face that looks like she can and would take on anything the world could ever throw at her...

"Harry? You okay?" I felt her place a hand on my shoulder, I looked up from the floor to my sister's face. I could see her eyes, they showed concern and compassion that only I could see in Retta. How could our parents fo this to us? I felt a sob rise again in my throat, this time I didn't hold it back, and I sobbed into Retta's shoulder. Retta was silent, she didn't make a single peep throughout my entire sob session. My vision was blurry from tears then once I calmed down, Retta made sure I didn't crash into anything on the way to my room. We are both five so our beds were low, I climbed into bed and took my glasses off. Then Retta did something unexpected, before I pulled up the covers she pulled them up and tucked me in.

"Hey," I hiccuped softly, still not totally done crying, "I'm not a baby, you don't have to tuck me in." I sniffed, I hated it when Retta treated me like a baby just because she was ten minutes older than I was. Her face was blurry because I didn't have my glasses on, Retta snorted and was it my imagination or did she crack a smile?

"If Mom's not here to tuck ya in, then I'll do it." She declared confidently(sp?) her voice was louder than usual too, like at normal volume and not the short, curt responses that Retta usually gave anyone she ever talked to, even me. "Even though were gonna be sent away, were gonna stick together no matter what, got it?" There was a short silence.

"You been sneaking out and watching muggle TV again?" I joked, while nodding my head. I heard Retta snicker then she 'hit' me upside the head (more like tapped) with her hand gently. I heard her leave and the door shut. Then five seconds later she opened the door again and stuck her head through.

"Harry if ya aren't asleepin' in the nex' ten minutes, I'm a'gettin' the fryin' pan, got it?" Then Retta shut the door and went back to her room, we both watch waaaay too much muggle TV. I snickered then went to sleep...

A few Days Later...

The last few days had been nothing but a blur, first we were told to pack stuff that we would want to take with us, so that's what Retta and I did while the House Elves packed us clothes and toothbrushes and stuff like that. Today was the day Mum and Dad would send us away, Retta's been quieter than ever, she won't talk to anyone, not even me or the House Elves. I double-checked my special stuff inside my knapsack, my practice wand still hadn't been found so that was safe, I was wearing my watch, and my book though I'm a bit sad to say that it seemed a bit to thin for my taste.

Earlier today I found Retta reading in the library, our parents old textbooks?

"Hey Retta whatcha readin'?" I asked.

"Mnph." She mumbled. I shook my head, then she picked up another book from a large stack and pushed into my hands without looking up from the book she was currently reading.

"We're goin' to a place with no magical info at, we gotta learn as much now before we get sent away and never see this library again." Retta answered in an out of character hurried manner.

"Kay." I plopped down and read a book about arithmancy. I couldn't understand most of it because most of the equations could only be done with different things called formulas. (A/N: Math my most hated enemy!) And Retta and I were still learning our seven times tables. About half an hour later I switched books and started reading something about a bunch of different shielding spells that there were, one of them being protego. I wanted to try it out with my practice wand but unfortunately Retta said something about Mum and Dad seeing it and then taking it away. So I wrote the spell down on a tiny piece of parchment and stuffed it into my pocket for safe-keeping.

Retta found a book about plants and was totally engrossed into reading it that she didn't notice when Kaddie had popped in to tell us that we were to leave for our Aunt Petunia's house soon. I nodded and put the book down and checked my knapsack again, then looking up at Retta she inclined her head towards her knapsack. I sometimes find that creepy, when Retta knows what I'm going to ask or say before I even say it. Like now, I was going to ask if I could look through her knapsack, just out of curiosity, and she didn't even let me start asking!

I peered inside the brown knapsack, Retta was never fond of bright, noticeable stuff. Like the robes that the Mystic Man always wore, with moving moons and stars all over the place, Retta loved things in simple (and slightly unnoticeable) colors or patterns, at least that's what she usually picks out. Then I rolled my eyes and looked through Retta's knapsack, five silver sickles, a Salazar Slytherin and other assorted chocolate frog cards, two packs of exploding snap cards, and a book about magical creatures and mythological legends.

"Gee Retta ya gotta tell me how ya do that." I grumbled as I closed the knapsack.

"It's a talent," She shrugged, "Ya either got it or ya don't, simple ain't it?" I rolled my eyes, great Retta was getting full of herself, just what the world needs.

"Just what the world needs, you with an inflated ego the size of Diagon Alley." I heard Retta snort indignantly.

"It's not an inflated ego if I'm really that good." She said waving her hand dismissively.

"Grr." I said, really I had nothing else to say. 'Oh well at least Retta was talking...'

"Your parents is wanting your presence(sp?) now." Another house elf had popped in the room. I nodded, thanked the elf, and snatched up my knapsack while Retta did the same. I sighed, and Retta walked behind me out of the library. When we got to our rooms I picked up my glasses case, and Retta had taken Mr. Fluffums and stuffed him into her knapsack. I don't think anyone knows about Mr Fluffuns, he was a stuffed white dog with fangs, claws and everything. Yet after all that cool stuff, Retta names him Mr. Fluffums, I even asked her why and Retta said something about his full name being Trux Lupus the Fluffy, or Mr. Fluffums for short. I didn't ask after that, I mean I've got my stuffed griffin, Steele whom I was currently trying to stuff into my small five-year old sized knapsack.

"No matter what, we got each others' backs, got it?" Was the last thing Retta said before going silent as we walked down the hall

towards the living rooms where the fireplace was. I saw the remaining warmth in Retta's face vanish in the presence of our parents. I think Retta takes things harder than I do when it came to our parents. Sometimes they remembered us and sometimes they didn't, but Retta always noticed that they never ever forgot Hayden. When I think about it Retta's never even spoken to our parents, not once even when she learned to talk, not once. I talked to Mum though, sometimes Dad, but that hasn't happened in a while.

"Well come on let's go you're going to love your Aunt's place, a nice place called Privet Drive I think." Dad said as he ushered us into the floo. Then we flooed to a house with lots of cats, or as Dad said, well something about Kneazles.

Then we came to another house that was large and square with a perfectly well-kept garden and a greenhouse, it looked exactly the same as all the other houses! Talk about being afraid to leave your own house for fear that you might spend hours going up to the wrong house and trying to get in, or even seeing if it was you house!

Retta and I greeted our Aunt Petunia politely and she basically ignored us. I could practically feel the loathing she had for us and we hardly even knew her, I wished that Mom was here but, sadly our Dad said Mom would be too emotional about this. Soon Dad left and Aunt Petunia turned to us, her face was red from arguing with Dad. I could tell she did not like this arrangement, not one bit. Then when a huge, fat man came grumbling through the doorway took one look at us then he and Aunt Petunia discussed something in another room. Then, the person who I learned to be Uncle Vernon, came into the kitchen.

"Okay listen up you twin freaks, this my house so there are going to be some rules around here." Uncle Vernon practically yelled everything out. "We are taking you freaks into our home so you **BETTER BE GRATEFUL!**" His fist slammed onto the tabletop. "You will not sit around and lounge all day, you will have a list of chores to complete **EVERY SINGLE DAY!** We have to send you ungrateful brats to school, so no **FREAKISHNESS** or freaky business or there will be dire punishment, this is a respectable household and I don't want you brats ruining it, you freaks got that?" He had a red face now, he looked like he was going to explode or burst into flames or something, quite frankly he scared me.

"Yes sir." Retta and I said simultaneously. Then soon we were shoved into a cramped cupboard under the stairs, and left to sort out our stuff. I felt a bruise forming on my arm and my cheek from when I hit the doorway to the cupboard on the way in, when Uncle Vernon shoved Retta and me in. Retta and I looked at the trunk we shared and tried to make room inside the cupboard by rearranging things. Soon we both had enough room to lie down, I wasn't sure if it was evening already but the lights were turned out and soon Retta and I were both sound asleep...

THUNK!

"WAKE UP YOU BRATS!" It was Uncle Vernon, he banged on the door. Then Aunt Petunia 'showed' Retta and I how to cook breakfast.

"I want you to do this everyday, don't burn everything." She said venomously(sp?) as she handed me the spatula. It was hard to flip the pancake because I was too short to see the top of the stove and I burnt my self three times. The first time I burnt myself I cried, then Aunt Petunia slapped me for being an ungrateful freak and burning Dudley's pancake. After that I tried to be quiet, I didn't see Retta for the rest of breakfast except when she came in from doing laundry, Aunt Petunia must've 'shown' her how to work the washer.

Dudley was a bully. Simple enough, Retta and I tried to ignore him but he somehow managed to get us into trouble anyways. When Retta I were carrying three plates each to be washed, he tripped us and the dishes shattered.

"BOY!" Uncle Vernon yelled at me and hoisted me up into the air by my shirt, his face was red again. Then with his other hand he grabbed Retta by the shirt and carried us out of the kitchen and threw us both against the opposite wall, and after that there was a big blur of pain as our Uncle beat us both senseless, I remember the crack of his belt against mine and Retta's backs and those heavy punches and kicks. Then after what seemed like an eternity, my vision swam and the last thing I remembered was Uncle Vernon cussing and throwing Retta and I into the cupboard under the stairs, I felt my head hit the back wall then I blacked out...

A/N: Hey peoples! I finally got around to updating, heh, did I portray the Dursleys right? Talk about evil chlid abuse, it's evil nothing else to say besides that I still think that Vernon and Petunia are a couple

of married monsters who cursed the world by procreating, but that's just my opinion. Please Review! See that button down there? Well click it and review! Just to tell you, I do not plan on making James and Lily totally bad parents, but I need some plot here and they really do think that it's for the best. (Though they don't think that their kids would be hated enough to be put through child-abuse.) PLZ REVIEW! I wanna know what ya'll think! Oh yeah, I tried to get Retta to act more her age and Harry too, remember they are both currently FIVE years old so I'm not trying to over-do it with the maturity level. Constructive criticism is also acceptable, if you're gonna review saying that this fic sux and that I suck at writing, then why are you even reading this fic in the first place, huh? To all my faithful reviewers out there I say peace out yo! (Warning: Dark, Child-abuse filled scenes ahead, but nothing too graphic, you have been warned.)

Among Other Things: (some clue 2 da future!)

-This might become a slight super!Harry and super!Harrietta

-If you have ideas on plot then by all means tell me and I'll figure out if it fits into the story or not. (NOTE: This is not a crack!fic so don't even try.)

Cupboard Chronicles

Chapter 5: Summertime Hell

Harrietta's POV...

I think that last few days have been the most painful days of my life, if I could read minds, I think Harry would most definitely agree with me. Harry and I were just beaten senseless by Uncle Vernon, for breaking dishes. It was dark, but I could see the purple bruises that had formed on Harry's stomach, arms, legs, and the bruise on his left cheek. I couldn't see out of my left eye on account that it was beaten shut, but from what I could see we were going to be seeing the inside of this cupboard often.

"Hey Harry," I shook Harry's shoulder gently, he slept on. It was dark, dusty, and cool in this little cupboard actually. I don't think any of my bones were broken so I should be fine, for now anyways. I tried to get up, and I winced as I felt my head throb painfully. I touched one of the bruises on my arm gingerly, right now I was wondering what Harry and I did to get such bad karma, or relatives.

"Retta?" Harry's voice was hoarse, even in the dark I could still see that Harry was badly bruised.

"Hm?"

"It wasn't just a 'ightmare was it?" Harry's voice was a little stronger this time.

"Sadly," I shook my head, "no, this nightmare's real as I am." Unless I stopped existing last I checked.

"I was 'fraid of that." Harry's expression was downright depressed. He fumbled around looking for

something; but what?

"What are ya lookin' for?" I asked quietly, I didn't want our 'relatives' to hear us talking.

"Glasses." Harry said as he opened our trunk, "Can't see a darn thing..." He mumbled under his breath.

"Oh yeah, here." I gave Harry his glasses. But the frame was bent, though it wasn't broken at least, so that was a plus.

"Thanks. What time is it?" He asked as he attempted to straighten out his glasses. I looked at my watch that I got in that wierd package, the glass had a crack running down the middle though. I scowled, then took my watch off and put it in my knapsack, so it wouldn't get even more broken.

"Sorry, no clue." I sighed, "my watch doesn't tell time."

"Spy Kids much?" Harry laughed quietly, then stopped as he winced. Our Uncle must've bruised his ribs or something, the jerk!

"Hey, I never saw the whole thing." That much was true I remembered watching that in the kids section of the muggle store where they were showing some movies for free to little kids like me and Harry.

"Still," Harry's looked thoughtful, "how long did we sleep?" I shook my head slightly and shrugged my shoulders.

"Let's see if we can get outta this c-" I was cut off by a high, shrill yelling that would bring a banshee to her knees, Aunt Petunia.

"Wake up and get out here you brats!" Aunt Petunia's voice was all shrilly and high-pitched. I got up then tried the door, it was locked.

"Aunt Petunia, we can't get out the door's locked." Harry said as he stood up as well. Aunt Petunia huffed angrily as unlocked the door muttering something about troublesome freaks. I felt my lips curve into a frown, then I looked at Harry as he went out of the cupboard first. I went out after, then tripped on something and landed flat on my face, resulting in more screaming from Aunt Petunia. I mentally sighed, this was going to be a loooong day...

Okay, so far life at the Dursley's hasn't been so bad, I mean Harry and I only had to do every bit of housework and yardwork that this house could produce! Aunt Petunia had given us everthing, from gardening to cleaning the entire house all by ourselves. Things were even worse when the chubby demon showed up, by that I mean my fat (and I do mean fat) cousin, Dudley. He'd trip us, mess up our

jobs, kick us and beat us up, he'd even blame all the messes he made on us which heaped more smacking and I got to say hello to Painsville yet again. So far I was out in the blazing sun taking care of the plants in the greenhouse. I was currently attempting with little success to pull up a stubborn weed, it would have been much easier, if I wasn't just barely three feet tall!

"Oof!" My hands slipped and I tumbled backwards into something. Or should I say someone. The silence was short-lived however, as the figure looming over me had started screeching. I had tumbled into Aunt Petunia, I could just curse my luck. At least Uncle Vernon was still at work, he was more harsh with punishing Harry and me. Aunt Petunia continued to screech something about ungrateful, good-for-nothing freaks contaminating her happy home as I stood up. I tried to look apologetic and stuff like that but sadly I don't think she bought it.

Slap!

My cheek suddenly stung with a sharp pain, I was thrown off balance, and I fell into a shelf.

CRASH! CLANG!

I flinched at the sound of breaking pots and gardening tools hitting the ground. Aunt Petunia's face was red now, but the screeching had stopped, then she roughly grabbed my wrist and dragged me to the house. Once inside she slapped me again, with much more force than the last one to my other cheek and she yelled at me, I saw Harry's head poke out from around one of the doorways of the rooms he was cleaning. I gave him a look that said 'stay put' and with a pained look, he went back to cleaning the shelves.

About thirty seconds later Aunt Petunia's rant ended and she threw me into the cupboard.

I wish that I blacked out, 'cause my middle hurt like some very bad words that I'd heard Uncle Sirius say when he jammed his finger in a doorway. I tried the door, but it was locked. With nothing to do I tried to take a nap, but before I slept I accidentally jarred one of my bruises. Then that's when I thought,

'Oh whoopee, more bruises to add to my new collection...' I grumbled sarcastically at the thought, and then I fell into a distant world of darkness...

In Harrietta's Dreamscape

I was in a garden, surrounded by thousands of flowers. There were high stone walls surrounding the garden, with vines that grew up and over them with thousands of tiny white flowers with purple streaks. Then at the foot of the walls there were lilies; lots of lilies, lilies of every size, shape and color; that grew there. There were roses too, pink roses, red roses, white roses, lavender roses, bright orange roses, many other colors. They shared the stone walls with the vines, protecting the garden with their thorns at the ready; their beauty with the other flowers was wonderful to look at.

Among all the trees, there was an oak tree that stretched high and tall. Who stood proudly there in this place, like a great protector, that's all he was known as, the Guardian of the Garden. On one of the long branches there was a simple wooden swing attached, with a small pile of books sitting nearby. From the swing you could see all the other flowers that were arranged in the garden thousands of different kinds of flowers, some probably didn't even exist anywhere except for within my own mind. So many flowers, some I've only seen in books, many plants that aren't flowers as well. The ones that I've seen in my parents' old textbooks, Herbology and Potions, those plants had a place here too.

Here the wind would blow softly through the trees and the grass, as if whispering some long forgotten tune from very long ago. The wind was playful, it would tap my shoulder then when I turned around it would giggle and tap my shoulder again. Wind would laugh, and sing for joy whenever I came back here. Wind was joy, wind was playfulness, wind was the laughter of this place, wind was also a prankster. She loved playing little jokes on me while I was here, with no ill will intended. Sometimes we'd play hide-and-seek or tag, but I always lose, not that I really cared. It was fun anyways.

In the middle of the garden there was a white gazebo, with blue butterflies painted on the sides. Like the ones that were always constantly flying around, not just blue butterflies but a rainbow variety of thousands of butterflies of each and every color combination you could even think of. They always stayed near the

flowers, along with the bees with black and yellow bands. The birds would always hang around in the trees, chirping a new melody every time I came to visit. The sun here was bright and warm but not scalding, the clouds were scarce in the blue sky but you could still pick out shapes from them, none the less.

I could see the pond where dragonflies were zipping above the surface, the pond connected to a small stream that ran through the garden. Sometimes it rained but not often, but that was just when the sun needed a break.

I stepped up onto the path that led to a house in the eastern corner, it was white with a blue roof. The walls were painted with small red flowers with light green stems. The house had three floors, one of that was a basement, and the second floor had a kitchen, a library, and a living room. The third floor had a bedroom, a playroom and a multi-purpose room.

I sat in the kitchen and looked out at the garden, then I did a double take.

"Hm, funny for a minute there I thought I saw Mom standing in the field." I giggled at the ridiculousness of the thought, no-one's ever here except for once when I tried to show this place to Harry, but then he couldn't see the place anymore. I couldn't feel any more pain or loneliness here, I had my friends and everything, and when I was awake I could spend time with my little brother Harry.

I sighed and laid my head on the table staring out at the field of edelweiss, feeling at peace for the first time in a long time. I smiled, then-

"YOU UNGRATFUL LITTLE WRETCH!" I was instantly wrenched out of my 'Inner Sanctuary' by Uncle Vernon's loud bellow...

The Real World...

I jolted out of sleep quicker than a deer ready to leap. I could hear Uncle Vernon yelling and then I heard a crash. Something like a vase breaking, then I heard Harry's voice...

"I'm sorry, Uncle Vernon. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to! I'm sorry!"

SMACK!

"Don't you ever call me that you freak! You." SMACK! "Will." SMACK! "Address." SMACK! "Me." SMACK! "As." SMACK! "Sir!" Uncle Vernon smacked Harry, at least by the sounds of it between every word. Then he shouted, "You and your freaky sister are no family of mine, any amount of freakishness will be met with CONSEQUENCES! Do you understand?" Then I heard something crack, and Harry cried out.

Suddenly, I was mad. I was absolutely, positively angry beyond belief. I was up and I ran out of the cupboard, down the hallway and into the living room. The sight that greeted me hurt to even look at, I saw a bruised and bloody Harry lying on the floor with Uncle Vernon beating the living daylights out of him.

"Leave my little brother alone!" I yelled as I jumped forward and shielded Harry, Uncle Vernon's face grew even redder, and I felt a fist slam into my gut. The fat cow shouted something incoherent to intelligent beings and continued to beat the feeling out of Harry and me, but mostly me.

Soon after one severe beating later Harry and I were thrown into the cupboard again and everything was dark. I the bruises and cuts hurt, Harry had a split lip and a black eye, I probably looked much worse.

"Why'd ya do that?" Harry put a too small blanket around my shoulders, "He wouldn't of kill'd me, an' he wouldn'ta beat like you just got."

"Heh," I felt my lips curve into a small smirk.

"Why?"

"'Cause nobody hurts mah little bro'." I remember Harry murmuring a 'thank you' and something about 'only by a few minutes,' before I drifted into unconsciousness.

My last thought before I passed out was, "Hey, wasn't the cupboard door locked before-?"

A/N: Hey people, yeah I know it's been a while since I've updated, but here's chapter five. PLZ Review people, thank you to all my

faithful readers out there you guys are all awesome for being patient and waiting for me to update. Thank you all I will update as soon as I can but school takes up most of my week ya know? My Dad's in and out of the hospital please route for him, he's loopy on meds right now. So far I've already started the next chap of the Maelstrom Twins so it should be up sometime before February ends. So don't get mad about it 'kay?

Cupboard Chronicles

Chapter 6: Heartache Spares No-one Harrietta's POV...

From then on things only got weirder, Harry and I took many trips to Painsville that summer. I usually stood up to Uncle Vernon when he beat Harry too much. That usually led to a painful punishment that involved fists, shouting, and kicking me into stuff. Harry and I had to cook, clean, garden and all that other stuff. Though as the summer dragged on I noticed that Uncle Vernon hit us less often, I wonder why?

"Retta?" Harry was wide awake, and a cracked clock read four-thirty A.M. I rubbed my eyes sleepily, and sat up.

"Yeah?"

"Wha' do ya think that Uncle Vernon's planning?" Harry's face was thoughtful, he had a point though. Uncle Vernon had been hitting us both less than he used to when we came here. I pushed the thoughts aside for later and I got up. My arms didn't hurt as much as they did a couple weeks ago, so I could move them right again.

"We got work Harry." I stated in a soft monotone, Harry nodded and we left the cupboard to start our chores. Harry had cleaning the living room and the dining room while I had to clean the kitchen and the sitting room. We'd try to finish cleaning before our relatives woke up, then Harry and I would work together on breakfast for our relatives. Usually though they were awake and would yell at us to wake up and work.

The pans were heavy, I wonder if that was on purpose or not? Harry had started on the bacon and I started on the eggs and toast.

"Retta?" Harry didn't look at me, he was concentrated on the sizzling bacon.

"Hm?"

"When do ya think that Mummy and Daddy are coming to get us?" His question was honest, but I really didn't have many answers to that one.

"Not the best person to ask ya know." I almost couldn't hear myself, my voice was so quiet.

"I know but do ya think we were bad?" I couldn't see Harry's face through his fringe of messy, black hair. "Did we do something wrong to make em' not want us anymore?"

"No we didn't, not tha' I rember." (A/N: yah I know I spell these wrong on purpose to show how Retta and Harry pronounce these words okay?)

"I'll bet they'll get us soon, the' may no' show it but they love us, and-" Harry was suddenly interrupted by a burning smell, the bacon was starting to burn. Harry made an attempt to save the bacon, it was only slightly more crispy than the others.

Soon the eggs were done and there were pancakes too, though halfway through the Dursleys were already awake and they gave us their daily berating. Harry and I got the badly burnt bits to eat and we both got backhanded by Uncle Vernon, or as Harry and I like to call him, the Stupid-nator .

After breakfast Aunt Petunia shoved brown paper bags at us, Harry looked confused, my face was most likely blank. She did a pitiful version of a scowl, at least compared to that scowling man who was at our birthday party months ago. Now that I look at it it's felt like even that was ages ago, Harry and I have gotten even thinner than we usually were back home.

"You're going to school today. No freakiness, or funny business or there will be double the amount of work that you do around here." Her hands came to rest on her hips, then she eyed us cruelly, "Got that freaks?"

None the less, Harry and I nodded our heads vigorously. I felt something stir inside my chest, the bubbly feeling of excitement. 'Yes! We get to leave this house for awhile!' It was like being given a vacation. Soon Harry and I were off walking to school because our relatives said that freaks couldn't take the school bus. Especially the same bus as their 'precious Dudders', bah that whale can go rot in a bloody corner for all I care.

I turned my head, Harry was smiling. Truly smiling, he hadn't smiled like that in a long time, it was a real sight. For some reason whenever Harry smiled I felt happy, just as an older sister should I suppose. I grinned slightly as we walked onward to our first day of preschool...

School kinda stunk. Most of this stuff was way easy for both Harry and me, we could add and subtract numbers easy. Dudley and his 'friends' would go 'Harry Hunting' which involved chasing and beating up Harry and me. One time when we were running, we ran into a dead end then we ended up on the school roof. Then we got in trouble with the principle and he called our relatives, Uncle Vernon was very mad. When we got to the house he hit us with the belt yelling something about 'beating the freakishness' out of us. Similar situations lead to the same consequences that usually left Harry and me feeling like we just got run over by one of those Hippogriffs that I read about.

Other things that happened were and were not limited to:

- Turning the teacher's hair bright blue
- Filling the lockers with gelatin
- Getting locked in the Janitor's closet
- and so on...

I say it just plain sucked...

One Monday morning, Harry and I ended up being late, very late. Like by an entire hour, then we got lost in the hallways and ran into Dudley and his friends, they chased us all the way to the gym. Then Harry and I hid in the library, and we decided to hide there for recess...

Soon Harry and I kept coming back to the school library every chance we got. We had read more books than some of the fifth graders! I don't know why people complain about reading so much because there is so much to learn. But I was more interested in the application of this knowledge, and how I could use it, to help Harry or myself. One day halfway through the term, Harry was off looking

for a book to read while I had just sat down with a book to read when-

"Don't you think that that book is a little advanced for you young lady?" I nearly jumped from my seat, I turned my head to see an young lady librarian standing there.

The lady was tall with short, messy brown hair, a t-shirt with floral print on it, and blue eyes behind a pair of round glasses. Her face had a slightly stern look that made her look slightly intimidating. I looked down at the floor, then up at the librarian.

"Not really, I kn' read it fine."

"Well," the librarian's face softened, "You hide here don't you?" I stiffened slightly, then I snapped back into composure.

"Sorry?"

"Don't try to deny it, I know those boys are a bunch of rotten eggs when I see 'em chasin' you and your friend." The lady huffed.

"He's my brother, and I have a thing called albinism." I answered curtly. The librarian lady nodded, then I noticed that my brother had already been standing next to me and I hadn't noticed, when did that happen!

"Hi my name's Harry, what's yours?" Harry had stuck out his hand to the librarian in a friendly greeting.

The lady smiled and shook his hand, "Ms. Ralphes, it's a pleasure to meet a child with manners for a change."

Time Skip, Two Months...

Harry and I would go to the library during recess every day; she'd help us pick out books to read. She acted really surprised with the kinds of books that Harry and I liked to read, though I don't know why. Though really, today was a really bad day.

This morning, Harry burnt the bacon and our Uncle Vernon forced Harry's hand into the hot skillet. We both got chased by Dudley and his gang on the playground and the hallway, plus on the way to

school we got chased by this huge dog that wanted to bite us. Some days I kept wondering when our parents would come and get us, if they were even coming at all. But they wouldn't abandon us completely right?

"What's got you thinking so quietly?" I was snapped out of my thoughts by Ms. Ralphes again. Wait a sec, why'd she look so sad?

"Nuthin'."

"Where's Young Lightning?" I looked at her funny, where was this going? Sometimes as a joke she'd call Harry that because of his scar. Then as if Harry was psychic, he walked up to the table where Ms. Ralphes and I were.

"What's happenin'?" Harry plopped into the chair, and looked at Ms. Ralphes. She smiled, but it was sad.

"I'm saying goodbye..."

"Why?" Harry's voice was almost a whisper.

"I was fired." Ms. Ralphes huffed, in a way you could really tell that Ms. Ralphes didn't like it.

"Why?" Harry and I echoed together.

"They didn't believe me when I tried to help you two, that principle is a biased, sexist, son of a-" Then the rest of her muttered words were too quiet to hear. Then the school bell rang, well time to face Dudley and his gang of miscreant barbarians, again.

Harry and I have always had to walk back to the house alone, but Ms. Ralphes always got us across the street from the curb. We were halfway across the road, and I remembered the last two weeks, Ms. Ralphes always asking my brother and me if we were alright if we were eating enough. She even asked us how the Dursleys were treating us, then I remembered a conversation that happened a few days ago, or actually her question...

"Are they hurting you two?"

Of course Harry and I denied it, and said that there was nothing big going on but, I wonder if... Is that why she work as the library lady anymore? Is it mine or Harry's fault that she lost her job? During my thoughts I immediately heard a screech of tires behind me, then I spun around.

Wham!

A car plowed into Ms. Ralphes and she flew a good few meters and landed with a thud. Then everything went by so quickly, from the police arresting the drunk driver to them herding us back to the Dursleys. Uncle Vernon said that Ms. Ralphes deserved it, that she deserved to die for butting into other people's business.

'Ms. Ralphes died?' The thought made me feel as if a cold rock sat in my stomach.

"She was nice and she does not deserve to die!" Harry shouted suddenly, then the Stupid-nator's face started to get really, really red. Harry immediately looked like he didn't mean the outburst, but it was way too late. Before we knew it Uncle Vernon had thrown us across the room then went on to hit us with his belt over and over again. Then soon, Dudley joined in, hitting Harry with his Smeltings stick. (A/N: By the way can anyone tell me what a Smeltings stick is?)

Soon after what felt like hours, Uncle Vernon threw Harry and I into the cupboard. I felt like someone had just thrown a dishwasher on me, then as I drifted somewhere between being asleep and awake, I could hear a light sob from Harry. I could then feel him grab my hand, then I felt all tingly and some of the pain faded. I could see Harry too. His bruises were healing and some of his scratches started to disappear.

I could see the tears that streaked his face, I was sad too. Somehow, spending the last two months of school hanging out in the library with Ms. Ralphes , it was almost felt like having a Mom around...

"Heh," I smirked as I got finally processed what just happened seconds ago.

"What?" Harry sniffed.

"Magic, you did magic..." Then my world went dark...

A/N: Hey people! I told you I'd have this chapter out before February ended! Yeah I know sad and stuff well there ya people go Harry did more magic, there was accidental magic and stuff. PLZ REVIEW! I WANNA SEE MORE REVIEWS! IT'S NOT THAT HARD, JUST CLICK THE FRICKIN' BUTTON AND TYPE WHAT YA'LL THINK! (Sorry if I killed Ms. Ralphen but the story ahead of us is no place for young, spunky librarians...) REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! n re crispy than the others. htly more crispy than the others. e these words okya together on breakfast for our relatives.

Chapter 7: Road Chronicles: Anywhere but Back

Harry's POV...

For the next week, or was it two? I couldn't really tell, Uncle Vernon locked us into the cupboard with no food. I was hungry, Retta had taken to sleeping. When I asked why all she said was...

"Well, if their gonna leave us alone in this cupboard then at least we kn' catch up w' our sleep."

Then with that Retta fell asleep, again. Though I was feeling better than I had in days, and my arms didn't hurt as much as yesterday, I was really starving. Apart from the fact that my sister and I was usually always hungry since me and Retta came to Privet Drive. We haven't even been here for a year, and I would rather have Mum and Dad not care than stay here!

Grwwrrl... (A/N: I'm not really sure how to type the onomatopoeia for a growling stomach 'kay?)

I heard my stomach growl again, followed by Retta's but she was still sleeping. I would have been sleeping, but something wasn't right. I wondered if I was getting to be like Retta, getting a weird feeling when something bad was about to happen...

Then as I was about to keep thinking, the cupboard door slammed open, interrupting my thoughts. Retta jerked awake, looking slightly startled, for real. Retta was usually cold, at least she seemed that way to people who didn't know her that well, unlike me. Uncle Vernon had that mean look on his face again. Then he backhanded me.

"Well, grab that damned trunk of yours you damn freaks!" His face was red now, so Retta and I grabbed the trunk. Soon we were shoved into the car, and Uncle Vernon drove on, soon I could only see trees, trees, and more trees. Then the car stopped, and Uncle Vernon threw us out of the car, and dumped the trunk. It almost hit us as he threw it, then he went on to beat us to bloody pulps. Uncle, no he wasn't worth being referred to as that, Vernon smirked meanly.

"Goodbye and good riddance you god damn freaks!" He laughed, he sounded crazy to me. Then he got in the car and drove off. I let out a

breath that I didn't even know I was holding, I looked at Retta's bruised and bloody face, I think we looked pretty much the same at the moment.

"Wha' do we do now?" I could only whisper, my jaw hurt too much so say anything louder.

"Ya know?" Retta laughed, I think the pain was makin' her all loopy, "I don't know."

I'm not sure what was scarier, being stuck here alone in the woods, beat up, and on top of that lost, or the fact that Retta didn't have anything to say...

Third Person POV...

At Potter Manor...

"I DON'T CARE!" Lily shouted at the top of her lungs, "I don't care if you have the notion that they'll be jealous of their brother, that's what James and I are for! Were their parents," Her voice faltered, "and I want my babies back..."

"Don't worry about it," Dumbledore patted her shoulder reassuringly, "I have checked the wards, and they are all in place at full strength, your sister and her family can certainly take good care of them."

(A/N: At this point the whole crowd reading this can all feel free to yell, "BULL!")

"But don't you think that it's been long enough?" James said, okay even he was feeling a bit guilty for leaving two of his children in someone else's house.

"I have someone in that same neighborhood who has been keeping an eye on them even. They're fine, they can come back after they've cooled off and forgotten this little quarrel." Dumbledore continued, "I even had charms placed on them to tell me of their safety and overall health, and they haven't said anything discouraging yet."

Regardless to say, Dumbledore and the Potters meant well, it's just the decisions made were very crappy, for lack of a better term. But

soon they put the conversation out of their minds as Hayden stubbed his toe and started to cry, well more like scream...

Harrietta was already up, as was Harry. Though still very sore from the beating they'd gotten a few hours ago. They'd dragged the trunk off the dirt road, and hid beneath the cover of trees.

"Man I feel like sommun' ran me o'er." Muttered Harrietta in an angry tone.

"Ditto." Harry wheezed, he really hoped that nothing was broken. "So not ta repeat, but wha' in criminy are we gonna do?"

"I say we get our stuff outta the trunk, ditch the trunk, an' start makin' tracks." Harrietta smirked slightly as she dug out her and her brother's knapsacks. She tossed one to Harry while sorting through some of their stuff. It really wasn't much, when you really looked at it. Just some clothes, and other assorted junk...

"Should we go home?" Harry said as he kneeled next to his twin and began to rummage around for his clothes in the trunk, though he wondered if home really was home.

"Home?" Harrietta whispered softly in a wraith-like tone, "what home? They lef' us ta rot in tha' dang place. If tha's home, I'll eat dead grass."

Harry frowned, "Maybe they didn't know how bad it'd be." (A/N: note that both of them are 5, & Harry wants to try to have some faith in their parents, I mean unless they're(as in James&Lily) complete and total b&trd\$ anyone would do the same when you're 5 yrs. old right?)

Harrietta snorted and picked out a black t-shirt and changed into it. (A/N: I said it before & I'll say it again, THERE WILL BE NO INCEST! (just 4 future reference) so nobody even ask!)

"I'm serious."

"Right, and I'm Uncle Moony." Harrietta remarked, Harry's face was blank. Then three seconds later, they both burst out laughing. Then had to stopped because of the pain in their guts on account of their "Uncle's" goodbye punches.

"Come on Retta, wha's the wors' tha' kn' happen?"

"Dey sen' us back." Harrietta then concentrated stuffing the essentials into her bag, Harry did the same with his. Soon the trunk was empty of 'useful' clothes, the twins had decided that robes would be useless to them so they tore up one to cover up some of the bad scratches.

When they looked up, they realized that it was already dark. It started to get pretty cold too, so they used one of the robes they were about to ditch as a blanket to share...

"Were in da' middle o' nowhere aren't we?" Harry stifled a laugh as he tried to keep his face straight as he said this, then he adjusted his glasses.

"Yep." Harrietta yawned sleepily.

"So where we goin'?" Harry wanted to talk more, Harrietta rolled her eyes at her twin.

"Figure it, in the mornin'." She mumbled.

"Come on we need a plan."

"Fine." Harrietta sat up, and gave Harry a grin. "Ya just won' stop buggin' eh?"

"I do not bug." Harry piped cheerily, "I annoy, irritate, vex, rile, and I also bother." The white haired twin snickered softly.

"Is it normal to be this happy when we're this beat up?" Harry muttered quietly.

"That we're outta that torture pit?" His sister snorted softly, "Don' care if it's abnormal, anywhere at this point's better than there."

"Yeah, but-"

Grwwrrl...

Harry was cut off by the growling of both his and his twin's stomachs. Then they remembered, they were really starving!

"Kay, first thing tomorrow, we get somethin' to eat!" Harrietta declared in a slightly louder than usual voice, at least for her.

"Agreed." Harry said as he hugged himself. 'Man it's cold.' He thought annoyedly. "But after that where do we head to?"

"Anywhere but Privet Drive and Potter Manor." Harrietta answered curtly.

"I'm gonna miss Uncle Moony and Uncle Siri though." Harry saw his sister nod.

"Yeah me too," then Harrietta's face adopted a thoughtful look, "but if we go to 'em then we'll end up back where we started. What's the point?"

"Ya got a point," Harry paused, then smiled, "I say we go out and see the world."

"Cool." Harrietta was drifting off to sleep again, she hugged Mr. Fluffums tightly as she snuggled into the makeshift blanket.

"Where to first?" Harry wondered out loud.

"Where else, moomph, fomofuu..." Harrietta voice trailed off into an almost asleep mumble.

"What?"

"Anywhere... but back..." Then Harrietta fell fast asleep, really good sleep. Sleep that would actually hit the REM cycle later, truly restful sleep, sleep that would- (A/N: Okay narrator wants to ramble on, to spare you all the pain of having to read a paragraph describing how restful Harrietta's sleep was/is now compared to time at Privet Drive)

Harry snuggled into the shared robe-now blanket next to his sister, then he smiled.

'Maybe we'll see Uncle Moony and Uncle Siri again someday,' Harry thought. 'But I guess for now...' Harry frowned, saddened. 'No! I

gotta think positive, Retta and me'll definitely see 'em again. But for now we got a world to see and places ta go! Look out world Retta an' I are headin' your way!' Harry felt very determined, and he believed every word of that statement.

"Yeah, anywhere but back, that's definitely where we're goin'..." He smiled and clutched Steele tightly, then fell asleep...

A/N:Hey I finally updated this fic, I feel that this might feel a bit short but I'm trying to update as much as I can. I'm writing this chap at 10:35 P.M. so don't nag me. I'm doing this with a cold too so no naggy! Now I hope you liked the chap, yeah I know I'm feel that the Dursley's haven't been punished yet, don't worry "what goes around, comes around" it'll happen eventually. As you can see I know that so far I haven't gone in depth with Lily and James, I'm not totally all out bashing them. People can be nice and/or caring people, but everyone is capable of making completely crappy decisions that screw everything up. I'm not into Lily bashing, though since both her and James are dead in the canon their personalities towards their kids, or just them in general, are totally up to us fanfiction writers. I read basically almost anything with a decent plot that doesn't freak me out. All I'm trying to say is that I'm not sure whether to all out bash the Potter parents, or give them a chance at redemption with their other two kids (Harry & Harrietta). I mean, what kind sick and demented person would want to actually dump their kid/s into anything like the hellhole I described the Dursleys' to be? (Answer: a very sick, demented person, who's –Insert "The Elder Swear" from Potter Puppet Pals, if you don't know it type in "potter puppet pals wizard swears" on the youtube search bar and watch it-) Now onto the matter of Dumbledore, I do not do Dumbledore bashing! He is a good guy, who's a grandfatherly figure to a lot of people. Minerva McGonagall has a HUGE crush on him for crying out loud. It may look like Dumbledore bashing but it's not. He just trust people too much, he thinks that deep down everyone has some good in them. This may be true in some cases, but that doesn't mean all people are gonna act on them! Okay I've rambled enough, my muse Rose is glaring at me menacingly so I guess I should stop.

PLZ REVIEW!

PLZ REVIEW!

PLZ REVIEW! (my muse Rose is starved for reviews!)

Chapter 8: Road Chronicles: First Day's Freedom

Harrietta's POV...

Cheep...

Cheep...

Cheep... Cheep, cheep...

"Stupid bird..." I muttered, I wanted to sleep.

Thunk!

Then an acorn dropped onto my head, my eyes snapped open and I noticed that everything had this blur around it, gah, I hate that. I fumbled for my glasses, and put them on.

"Yay," I readjusted my glasses, "welcome to the world of focus." It was probably almost dawn, at least I think it was, the sun wasn't even up yet, but the sky over the horizon was turning a sorta pinkish red color.

Grrwwrl...

'Dang,' I thought as I heard my stomach growl, yet again. Harry was still asleep, so I decided to make a mental checklist of our stuff, so I looked around in my backpack, its contents included:

- 2 packs of exploding snap cards
- two pairs of socks
- 1 pair of shorts
- 2 T-shirts
- 4 pairs of underwear
- a small assortment (5) of chocolate frog cards
- my old baby blanket

-Trux Lupus the Fluffy (AKA: Mr. Fluffums)

-my hair clip/ribbon set (5 ribbons in different colors & 3 sets of 2 hairclips)

-5 silver sickles (I still couldn't believe that those idiot Dursleys hadn't found it.)

-and a small pocket-sized book

'Okay,' I felt my mouth twitch into a grin, 'everything's here.' My weird watch was on my wrist and I was wearing my butterfly pendant.

I felt a bit sad when I saw the book though, Ms. Ralples gave it to Harry and me a week ago. The title was, *The Life of Silas Sadlow*, it was a bit long and Harry and I hadn't finished it yet. But so far it made me think of my life, and my brother's, except Silas's mother showed that she cared more noticeably...

Then I heard Harry stir, finally, I can't believe it took this long for him to wake up.

"Bout time ya got up." I heard Harry groan, then he rubbed his eyes.

"Aw shush up..." Then he yawned. I stared at my twin, then as if on cue both our stomachs growled loudly.

"Dang, I'm starving." I put a hand on my stomach, it felt so empty it actually felt painful. The rotten Dursleys hardly ever fed Harry and me anything, so I've felt that tons of times, same for Harry.

"Me too." Harry shouldered his backpack. We took one last look at the trunk, the only robe we had was the one we used for a blanket. I don't know why but I found a dictionary in there, Harry looked at me oddly.

"Why's there a dictionary in here?"

"Beats me," I know that I've seen this somewhere... "Oh yeah, I swiped it from the Dursleys never-used bookshelf."

"You're not gonna turn into a kleptomaniac are ya?"

"Course not." I snorted, it's not like those monster relatives even used the books they had.

"Should we take it?" Harry asked and I shrugged.

"Hm, whatever. Take it." Then we got up and walked towards the road, well kinda-sorta limping. Now that the sun was up I could see the bruises on Harry's face and on my arm, as we followed the road.

"Hey Harry can ya do that glowey thing again?"

"Huh?"

"Ya know, when that oaf Vernon beat us up? You healed us, rem'ber?"

"I think so, can't believe I forgot." Harry looked thoughtful again, "I remember a tingly feeling, like last year, remember?" He was talking about when he flew outta the oak tree.

"It was magic." I've been so stupid! If we practiced much sooner, we woulda left that damn place months ago! I really feel kicking myself right now. But there really was no point in beating myself up for something that can't be changed now, crudmonkeys...

I looked at Harry, "Can ya do it again?"

"Don't think so..."

"Oh well," I sighed quietly, and Harry's stomach growled again, and mine followed. "Damn I'm hungry. How far did that jerk drive us?" My stomach hurt it was so empty.

"Don't know."

"That's helpful." I grumbled.

"Is it possible to eat paper, it's technically a tree, and I read ya could eat bark-" Harry rambled.

"Can't eat the dictionary 'cause of the ink." I interrupted.

"Darn."

"Ditto."

After a couple hours of walking, Harry and I finally found civilization. It was a warm day, though you could tell that it would be autumn soon, 'cause it felt colder later in the day. People mostly just ignored us, that I could be thankful for, Harry and I wandered around town and avoided most people. We were pretty short so we almost got knocked over a few times. I spotted a supermarket, I knew what one looked like because Aunt Petunia made Harry and I 'help' her shop. As in we carried everything from the supermarket to the car.

"Look, store!" I chirped as I spotted the huge building with a huge sign that said 'Wal-Mart'

"Retta we have the wrong kinda money..." My twin pointed out. I grumbled and started brainstorming for ideas, though that's hard to do, when your darn starving!

"Who says we're buyin'?" Time to put my skills to good use.

"How? People'll see."

"Gotta be quick and quiet." I said as I pulled my hair into a ponytail, my hair was sort of a medium length, so the ponytail was bit short. Aunt Petunia once tried to shave mine and Harry's heads, but our hair grew back overnight and Uncle Vernon beat the daylights out of us when he found out.

Shaking myself out of my thoughts, I walked into the store. Soon Harry and I had picked out a few candy bars, a couple water bottles, and a small bag of chips, but then Harry asked something.

"How're we gonna leave, wi'out bein' seen'?" His voice was barely even audible.

"Umm..." I really didn't know, "I thought we'd get in here and a plan would jus' hit me, bam!" Harry smacked his forehead.

"Great. Just peachy keen." Harry muttered annoyedly to himself. Then he smiled, and turned to me.

"I got an idea!" He whispered excitedly, "Gimme all th' stuff an' you distract people, it's genius."

"How'm I gonna distract 'em?" I folded my arms, this had near-disaster written all over it. But then again what didn't for Harry and I?

"I don' know." Harry retorted, "do anything."

"Fine," I sighed, "but we need something to hide 'em in." I began to look around the aisles away from the cash registers, no, no, no, hah jackpot!

Finally I found a small rack with jackets on them. I picked out two of the smallest though they still ended us being over-sized. Mine was just plain black, the one I got for Harry was a very dark green; both of them had zippers and hoods. Though the sleeves were way long compared to both mine and my brother's arms, they felt warm. I went to find Harry, and we snuck into a bathroom in the back.

Then we ripped off the tags and put on the jumpers, then Harry put a hat in my face.

"What's this?" I asked quietly.

"A hat, duh." Then he pointed to my head, or more specifically my hair, "ya gotta cover up your hair, everyone's gonna know ya by your hair if they see it." With that I put the cap on, it was plain black in color, same as the one Harry put on his head. Soon we were out and Harry had our stuff (that included my backpack) I just stood there and Harry pretended to look at the aisles. Crudmonkeys what the heck am I supposed to do?

Then I sneezed, so hard that my eyes watered slightly, wait that's it! I squinted my eyes and thought of really sad and depressing thoughts. I could've cheered, but I was currently trying to cry, then I thought about how Mom and Dad agreed to leave Harry and me with the Dursleys. Oh yeah that did it then the tears poured on. All that was left now was-

"WAHHHHHHH!" I let loose one of the most dramatic pitiful wails that I could hope to ever make. That got people's attention. Soon people crowded around me cooing softly and asking what was wrong.

'Hah, suckers.' I thought with an inward grin as I sobbed out a few incoherent words acting like a complete sobbing crybaby. Then it hit me, how was I supposed to get away from these people? They were really crowding now, this was not going well.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

The noise was deafening, I think it was some sort of alarm. I saw an opening in the crowd and dashed through it. I wiped my eyes clean of crocodile tears, and ran as fast I could go through the exit. Though I think I saw one lady who was stopped at the entrance/exit. The tall man in a uniform was checking the lady out for something. But I didn't really pay attention.

Later...

Soon I think I lost the people who wanted to help the 'poor, lost little girl.' I did my best to avoid everyone as best I could. I am currently hiding behind a trash can in an abandoned alley. I hadn't found Harry yet, not for three hours now and it was getting dark and that was worrying me.

'Did the cop catch Harry?' I thought in fear, 'what if they take him back to the Dursleys? Or send him to an orphanage, and I never see him again?'

Where in all crimony was he?

Crash!

"OW!" Came a familiar voice, "stupid trash can..." I relaxed, I felt relieved. The cop didn't get my brother yes! For once things were going our way, I couldn't believe the luck!

"Harry! Over here." I whispered hurriedly. I waved a hand out from behind the trash can I happened to still be hiding behind. Harry broke into a run then outta nowhere just hugged me right on the spot.

"I thought the cops mighta gotten ya." Harry said as he let go. He was carrying our backpacks, I took

mine back and looked through it. Everything was still there and I looked at Harry.

"Where were ya?"

"Lookin' for ya." He shrugged.

"Well what do we got?" I asked a bit lost in thought, dang I'd already forgotten what we got at the store.

But soon I forgot all that as Harry and I devoured the candy bars and chips, it tasted so good! Then

Harry raised his water bottle at me. I looked at him weird.

"What's that for?"

"Toast?" Harry said while he just tilted his head.

"There's no toast here."

"I mean a toast." He giggled.

"For what?"

"Our luck, um," Harry paused and scratched his head, "and to seeing the world, withou' nob'dy's help. No grownups."

"Can't say I c'n argue wi' that. 'Kay," I raised my water bottle and looked my brother in the eye.

"To some luck, and our first day of freedom!" We said together while we 'toasted' our water bottles. Then I smiled, and I started to snicker.

"What's so funny?"

"These ain't water bottles, their wattles." Then I burst out laughing, and Harry joined me. Then we finished off our first bit of real food in weeks. Then we noticed that it was already dark and then we heard thunder in the distance. We took cover under a small store canopy, and not a second too soon either. Then it began to rain so hard that it looked like a wall.

Soon we were leaning sleepily against the wall of the shop front...

'Look out world, here we come.' I thought as I could feel my eyes drooping, 'Here's to a life worth livin' Harry, definitely.' I promised myself mentally as I looked at my brother who was already asleep. Then my vision started to swim and I drifted off to dreamland...

A/N: Yay! I finally finished this chapter! I am so happy, I have been writing this thing on and off for at least 3 weeks now, I've been checking for spelling errors and grammar errors, so if there are any then they are either intentional or I just missed them during the 8 times that I looked this over before posting it. I've been writing this most during my math class (because it was and is so boring that I just wanna cry) and my Marine Science class. Be glad you people who are not in Honors Math classes it's pure evil, that's all there is to it. Now onward, yeah I know most 5 year old siblings could not pull off a Wal-Mart robbery, even if it is just 2 jackets, 2 hats, some candybars, a bag of chips, and 2 water bottles, but this is Harry and Harrietta were talking about here. But also everyone needs some good luck, and after all the crap they've been put through I say they deserve a break don't ya'll agree? I'll do more Harry POV in the next chap, I'm just better at writing from a girls POV 'cause I am one, ya know? Anyways I gotta go to this boring as hell 4 hr. driving seminar now plz review and make me and my muse, Rose very happy. If that happens then I won't be so depressed about wasting 4 hours of my Saturday in a boring seminar. I promise I'll have another chap up no later than month from now. If ya'll can guess (or give ideas that may change my mind) about who or what Astrum is then you get an imaginary cookie! YAY! Now for my old mantra spiel...

REVIEW!

REVIEW!

REVIEW!

REVIEW!

REVIEW!

PRESS THAT BUTTON DOWN THERE AND PLEASE REVIEW!

Chapter 9: Road Chronicles: Of Strangers, Chases & Snakes

Harry's POV...

So far it's been a few weeks and things were going pretty well. So far Retta and I have had a few close calls though. After that first day we learned something very important, never fall asleep in front of a store. A man came and yelled at us to get lost, we got the message and decided to book it. But then the man threw something and it knicked Retta in the head, not completely but I think the corner of the small box caught the side of her head.

Retta stumbled, but was otherwise fine. I sat down, we had finally stopped running and we were stuck sitting on a wet bench. The whole place was muddy and wet, no-one was out though so that was good. A couple of weeks ago, Retta and I decided to try and get more food, though we couldn't risk what we tried the first time we knew that much.

Soon we learned that the over-sized town was called Jonascaster. We learned our ways around the roads, even some of the back alleys. We tried stealing again but almost got caught and that day we didn't eat at all.

So a lot of times we tried to scour the dumpsters behind McDonalds, still most of it tasted awful. So far between Retta and I, we had no food, two water bottles that we'd fill up at drinking fountains, 5 sickles we couldn't use, whatever was in our backpacks, and 50 pence piece.

"I'm hungry." I said plainly.

"Duh," Retta snorted, then she sighed, "but same here."

"Let's go to the gas station, get a candybar or something." I got up and grabbed my backpack, so far Retta and I have been hiding out in this old warehouse. The place is dirty, dank, there's rust, bugs, and even rats but it keeps the rain out (though it still leaks in many places). The place was cold as ever though. When we weren't trying to find something to eat or money, Retta and I tried to call our magic, with little success though, to my disappointment...

We got to a small Seven Eleven store and bought two candybars there was a discount or something I think. (A/N: If any of you live in the UK plz give me an exchange rate, I want to be accurate, & if it's not too much to ask give me an example price of say what a happy meal would cost in British pounds, & does anyone know what the Wizarding money exchange rate is? Like how many knuts are in a sickle, and sickles to galleons?)

As we ate the Hershey's bars, I remembered the lady asking me where our parents were, I said that they let us go into the store to get a treat, she was so gullible I can't believe she even bought that. As I thought about these things I noticed Retta trying to call her magic again, then she looked at me.

"Well?" She arched an eyebrow, "You try too, we'll get this magic stuff down eventually, even if it kills us!" Retta ranted.

"I hope you're not serious." I said as I concentrated on my magic, I felt a small trickle of what could only be called power. I took out my practice wand, and tried that levitation spell. "Levi." The roach that it was pointed at went up an inch then dropped and scurried away.

"Cool!" Retta cheered, Retta-ishly. Then I tried the spell again while trying to grab more of my magic, but instead of making something float in air, the wand burst into flames. I instantly dropped it and stomped on it to put the mini-fire out.

"Well that was crap-tastic." I looked at her and thought, oh geez she's cursing now. I think that over the course of two and half weeks we've heard pages worth of curse words. Though the only one who really uses them is Retta and she doesn't talk much, at least her real thoughts anyway.

"I say we get hit the movies."

"Back or side door?" Retta grinned deviously.

"You pick." Soon we found ourselves outside the movie house and sneaking through a side door. Soon after we sat down in a movie my stomach growled.

"Crud..." I murmured under my breath, I wanted to enjoy a movie at least something to distract me from the fact that I'm hungry!

"Harry ya sure we picked the right movie?" Retta whispered in a barely audible voice, as we looked up at the screen, then two people started kissing in the row just in front of us. Retta and I blanched a bit, kissing's okay for older people but, these two were, oh cripes, did that guy just lick that lady's face?

Soon Retta and I were out somewhere near the place where they sold popcorn and stuff. Man, I wish we had money...

"Hey Retta, I'm gonna go scrape up some food 'kay?" Retta was looking at the candy behind the glass across the room. Suddenly I noticed that it was dark outside, it was then that I remembered seeing something that Retta and I could use.

"Harry," Retta interrupted my inner rant of genius-ness, and then she smirked, "Food stand's that way, doofus."

"I know that!" I snapped, "let's do some shopping afterhours." I whispered in her ear, then she smiled ear-to-ear as she followed me.

"I swear that you're gettin' to be as devi'us as I'm." Finally, I pushed open the door to the family bathroom and we hid there for a while behind a locked door. Gah, it's days like this that make me hate, no, loathe, being short...

12:36 A.M. near Theatre closing...

Okay, so far I've counted every tile on the floor and ceiling of this bathroom, and I AM BORED! We've had three close calls though, someone came in and unlocked the door to check for kids hiding in here. With that, Retta and I had to hide in the air vent just above one of the toilets a few times.

Since my sister and I were in here we took something like a bath using the sinks, hand soap, and the paper towels, it felt good to be clean, or at least somewhat. I couldn't tell, so far Retta and I took baths using someone's garden hose in a backyard when no-one was home. We washed our clothes the same way too. But it was kind of nice to use soap again, almost like home.

No, that place was not and is not home, not the place where our parents agreed to give us away. Home is wherever Retta and I happen to be. We don't need anything else...

Gwrrrl...

Okay maybe we need some dang FOOD!

"Retta does the worl' have an order tha' says we must be very, very, very, very, very, very bored and hungry right now?" I asked in a monotone that would match Retta's own monotone that she was sorta still using from time to time, just not as often.

Then, finally, the lights went out. 'Thank you God!' I thought with relief. I wanted to stop just standing and get out of this bathroom, but I thought we should wait for all people to leave. Retta and I were sleepy, but not so much. Around thirty minutes later I tried the bathroom door, it was locked.

"Darn it!" I hissed, this was not good we couldn't be stuck here!

"Let me." I think Retta smirked, but it was pitch dark so I couldn't tell. Then she snapped something, and then there was a, green light?

'A glowstick?' Okay where did that come from?

"Where'd ya get a glowstick?" I asked as I watched her take her hairclip out of here hair and jiggle it around in the lock.

"Off some idiot kid twice mah size." I heard Retta mutter. Some days I wonder why Retta never gets caught doing anything.

Click

The bathroom door was open, I mentally thanked the spy movies; they rule.

Soon Retta and I were going through the different parts of the closed theater. Soon, with a bit of stumbling in the dark even with the glowstick, Retta and I found the concession stand. Retta was about to pick the padlock to the candy drawer, but I stopped her.

"Ca' I pick this one?"

"Kay." Retta then handed me the hair clip and I attempted to pick the lock. Soon the padlock gave a soft click and I pulled it open. When Retta shined the glowstick over the drawer there were M&Ms, Snow Caps, Skittles, more M&Ms, and were those chocolate gold coins?

"Cool," I started to put the assorted candies into my backpack, Retta was doing the same. I looked at her, she was kinda quiet. "Hey Retta, what's with th' face?"

"You pick'd the lock in ha'f mah time." She huffed, I snickered and her eyebrow twitched. "Oh well," Retta grabbed two more Snow Caps boxes, and then she went looking through the cooler where there were bottled drinks. Soon we had a Pepsi, one Dr. Pepper, one Sprite, and one can of Coca-Cola between us, in our backpacks. We were checking the floors and drawers for useful stuff, I found a flashlight with no batteries, some pence pieces and a two beat up 5£(pound) notes. Soon Retta and I picked at the leftover popcorn that the cheapskate theater was going to probably going to sell again tomorrow.

"Let's get a bag to go." I muttered as I took a plastic bag and filled it with popcorn. I had to get a stool though, I was too short to reach and so was Retta. But there wasn't a stool or a chair to be found, anywhere. So I ended up balancing on Retta's shoulders, though I almost fell, twice.

"Harry," Retta's voice sounded slightly urgent, "We should go now, the glowstick's goin' out." I nodded, and added some butter to the popcorn, then I finally got off Retta's shoulders. We headed back to the bathroom and got in the air vent. In the dark, while Retta was getting into the vent I stepped on something. I bent down and picked it up, it was a wallet, I pocketed it for later as I climbed up into the vent and followed Retta's glowstick light...

Soon Retta and I were enjoying our cold, but still good popcorn in the warehouse. So much better than the dumpster at Micky Ds! After that we went to sleep.

The following morning mostly involved Retta and I waking up and having a breakfast of snow caps and cold popcorn.

"I say we hop a train, and split town." Retta said as she swallowed mouthful of popcorn and Snow Caps. We practiced our magic again, 'til we heard a voice...

"I saw 'em in their officer." Came the screechy voice of some lady. Retta and I had already grabbed our packs and ran towards the fire escape on the side of the building. But as we rounded the corner, we ran into, a police officer.

"Now what're two little tykes like yourselves doing here?" Then uniformed guy asked. But Retta had already grabbed my wrist and taken off in another direction before the man had even finished the question.

Later that day...

We were at a train station, Retta and I were both seriously out of breath. Then I remembered the wallet I found last night.

"Hey Retta," I whispered and she looked at me, "look what I found." I showed her the wallet.

"Cool." Retta was smirking now, "let's catch a train then." I smiled, some days I swear that Retta's moods change more often than a shark changes teeth. I once read at the library that sharks grow more and more teeth throughout their entire lives, I thought that was pretty cool. Retta and I joined the crowd of people, there must have been hundreds. All of these people were so much taller than Retta and I, it was kind of scary. Then I heard something, though I don't know how I could hear something through all the noise of the crowd.

/Stupid, humansss. Watch it you (ZOMG... Uh, this word is censored for a reason) damned clumsy bipedal oaf!/

"Hey Retta ya hear something?" She was trying to get a ticket with some money that we found from the wallet, unsuccessfully though, who would sell a five-year old two train tickets anyways?

"Yeah, I hear somethin'. I hate tha' ticket lady, damned hag." Retta murmured angrily. Then I heard the agitated voice again.

/WATCH IT! Can't you lumbering oafssss sssee me ssslithering here?/ I looked at the ground, and saw a snake trying to slither

through the crowd without getting squashed, I felt pity for him. I went up to the snake.

/Hey I didn't know snakes could talk./ As I stared at the snake.

/A human? You lumbering oafssss sssspeak?/ The hissing voice sounded surprised, /It issss a sign!The apocalypsssse issss near! A mossssst woeful day this isss! My life issss flassshing before my eyessssss!/ I was vaguely aware of Retta rolling her eyes at the snake's dramatics. Then as the reptile kept ranting someone was about to step on it, so I ran into the man and his step missed the snake, barely.

"Watch it brat!" The man scowled as he shoved me aside and walked away grumbling.

"Dude, we gotta catch the train, leave the snake if it's just gonna be all crazy." Retta adjusted her backpack on her shoulder and I nodded as I re-shouldered mine. Retta's eyes were full of apprehension? She was tense, I didn't move my head but I felt like I was being watched, I saw someone. The man was tall, he had a black suit, like in the "Men in Black" movie, but I could feel something. Then I knew, that man had magic, and he was looking for us.

I didn't wanna be paranoid so Retta and I walked around the station sticking with the huge crowds for a bit, but the guy kept following us! So we ran towards the train, any train is good with me as far as I'm concerned!

Soon we left the crazy and still rambling about the 'end of the world' in the crowd and we snuck on the train, the man tried to get on the train, but the ticket man wouldn't let him. That was a relief.

It was difficult though. We had to hide from the Ticket-man, he could kick us off the train, or worse, send us to the police, then the orphanage. Retta and I decided to hide in one of the empty passenger cars. We've been here for a couple of hours, we already got some dry roasted peanuts from and lady selling them on a cart, I leaned on my backpack... I think I'm going to take a nap or something-

/Hey! I can't breathe in here!/ I literally jumped out of my seat, Retta was just as startled. The voice was extremely sarcastic but a bit familiar.

/What was that?/ Retta muttered quietly.

/What I'm not that memorable?/ The voice's tone sounded insulted, /You have terrible memoriesssss!/

/The snake?/ I thought out loud.

/Thank you! At leassst sssome humansss have sssome brainsss!/
The snake's voice paused, then added, /would it kill ya to open thissss sssack thing of yoursss? I ssseem to be sstuck.../

With that I opened my backpack and out slithered a two-and-a-half-foot snake. The snake was black in color with orange-red eyes like shifting fire or lava even. The fangs looked a bit short, like they weren't completely grown yet. When the snake slithered to the floor it looked a bit awkward in its movements.

/How can you ssspeak the language?/The snake asked suspiciously.

/What language? I'm speaking plain English./ Okay can anyone spell confused?

/No you're not you are sssspeaking in the noble tongue of the ssserpentssss./

/Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, we can talk to snakes now? As if life couldn't get any more complicated./ Retta commented sarcastically.

/Well, all this weirdness aside,/ I rolled my eyes, /my names Harry and this is my sister Retta, what should we call you?/

/I have no name./ The snake said looking at me.

"That's so not right." Retta clenched her fist, "everyone deserves a name."

"Right so snake do you want a name?" I turned to the snake, I just got a blank stare.

/You're talking your human babble talk, human. I can't understand that/Okay now the snake sounded annoyed. I tried to speak again.

/Sorry? I just asked if you wanted us to name you.../ I mumbled.

/Truly?/ Okay this snake had more mood swing than a moody lady.
/Of course, azzzz long azzzz it issssn't sssstupid like thosssse (censored) damn (censored) retarded namessss you humans curse dogs with, like that damned son of a (censored) (censored) (censored) who nearly ate me, his name was Tinkerbelle./ I snickered, Retta looked blank. But Retta could seriously weird me out, like she'll look all blank one moment then she'll burst out laughing. I think it's funny though.

/You curse a lot don't you?/

/I ssssay it like it isssss. That isss no crime./ If snakes had arms this one would've been folding them and sorta pouting.

/Why did you follow us?/ I asked.

/You sssaved my life, no humanssss care for much but themssselvesss, I've found ssssomething of interesst, I musssst sssee this anomaly for myssself./ The snake answered truthfully.

/'Kay then first are you a girl or boy?/ I asked, first there was silence, then-

/WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHAT GENDER AM I?/ Okay the snake sounded really pissed now, /I'm MALE DAMNIT!/

/Okay, okay, don't get your scales in a twist,/ Retta was muttering,
/We just don't want to suggest names that don't match your gender specifications, what would happen if we name you something girly like Daisy or something?/

/Okay fine, I forgive you./ The snake huffed indignantly.

/How about,/ I stopped and now I scratched my chin, sheesh why couldn't I think of... Hah! I got it the perfect name for this snake is,
/Valerius./

/That will do nicely./ The newly dubbed Valerius hissed his approval, and started to slither away but then he stopped. /Do you think that possssssibly you need another companion on thisssss little venture?/

/What?/ Retta and I may have a larger-than-most-five-year-olds vocabulary, but come on, I didn't even understand that last part.

/May I join you on thisssss trip?/ Valerius said exasperatedly.

/Why didn't ya say so in the first place?/ Out of the corner of my eye I saw Retta rolling her eyes, /Whatcha think Harry?/

/Well, the more the merrier, welcome aboard the S.S. Wanderer, our destination is everywhere!/ I was cheerful now.

/Well I have nothing better to do anyways./ Then Valerius shivered and curled up, I think the air conditioning was making it too cold for him.

/Hey crawl into mah sleeve, it's warmer./ I said as I stuck out my arm to the obsidian colored serpent. Soon he was wrapped around my arm and sleeping like a rock. I think I'm nodding off too...

Crack!

"Okay seriously why the(censored) and (censored) are we always being (censored) followed by every damn (censored) (censored) (censored) damnable (censored) retarded (censored) people who are too damn (censored) stupid and (censored) unintelligent that they won't (censored) stop (censored) (censored) (censored) following us damnit? It's getting on my last (censored) nerve!" Retta was on a real rant that even elicited a comment from Valerius about teaching the young the art of cussing.

It was the man in the suit only this time he had on a black wizard robe with a dark hood that cast a scary shadow on his hidden face. I looked right and left, Retta and I were far away from both doors and I could tell Retta was trying to call her magic as I was. But really there wasn't a way outta this one. All I could really say was,

"Crap we're screwed."

A/N: Yeah I know evil cliffie. I couldn't help myself, (snickers evilly). This is my revenge for not reviewing enough on my last chap. I even spent half my entire school day typing this and my last chap and 3 reviews is all I get? Dude, that annoys Rose and me in more ways than one! I'm gonna start chap 9 soon, but I'm withholding it until my new rule is fulfilled.

New Rule: If I don't get at LEAST 8 reviews per chapter I DON'T CARE if I already have the next chap typed up. I'm not gonna post it until I GET 8 REVIEWS or MORE!

A/N (cont'd): With that out of the way I would just love to know what you thought of this chapter. PLZ REVIEW! If ya'll were too lazy to read my new rule then read it! REVIEW & I WILL UPDATE! I appreciate all of you who have been reviewing don't think I forgot you all, I'm extend my gratitude to you all. Tell me what you all think!

To 'The French Dark Lord'= I would love to send them off w/ the unicorns but where's the fun in that? People have already used that story idea, plus I don't think I'd do the unicorns personalities very well, I'd end up totally butchering it like Hollywood does book plots.

To Fiction12395867Don't go insane! If you're not sane, then well... Hey wait a minute isn't insanity just another person's version of sanity?

Poll: Valerius's Powers

Do you people want any special abilities for Valerius?

-name the power/s & describe them

-and could someone plz give me a species name? I'm terrible coming up w/ those! It would be a big help?

A/N(cont'd) sigh, again: What will happen to Harry, Harrietta and Valerius? Who is this mysterious stranger? Will their trip be cut short? Will they get sent back to the Dursleys? All these questions and more will be answered in the next installment of, the 'Maelstrom Twins'.

Chapter 10: Road Chronicles: Of Strangers, Messages & Quests

Harrietta's POV...

"Crap we're screwed." Okay I'm not sure where to begin, first off, a snake stows away in Harry's bag then the snake joins us and turns out the snake can talk. Then just when things were finally calming down somebody in a huge, black, scary cloak appears in the train car and Harry and I are trapped like a sardine in a can. My reaction so far has consisted of a long cuss-word filled rant and I tried to call my magic but so far it was unsuccessful, that's just darn craptastic!

"Ah, it's nice to know that the younger generation is learning how to express themselves." The cloaked figure said cheerily.

"Why the heck are you following us?" I was yelling now, then the man jumped up and clicked his heels together. Okay now I think this guy is a bit touched in the head...

"I'm not going to do anything. But I do have a propostion for you." His voice was sorta deep, but not by so much.

"We're listening." Harry chimed in, obviously curious. I glared at him, for all we know this could be a trap and this guy'll kill us, or worse send us back to that hellhole we escaped from.

"I want you to do something for me," Cloak-guy as I mentally dubbed him paused then threw up his arms in a comical manner, "if you do, I'll do you kids a little favor and help you out somehow!" Then he proceeded to dance a little jig, I heard Valerius mutter something about 'loony humansss'.

"Depends, what kind of help?" I was real suspicious of this guy though he looks scary, his personality kinda was a bit loony, he might be a weirdo with a split personality for all Harry and I know.

"Well..." Cloak-guy's voice trailed off for a few seconds, then he snapped his fingers and exclaimed, "I could help you two by," He paused and looked around as if someone was in the train car to overhear, geez we were alone nobody's here! Harry and I leaned in to hear his next words, "taking off those spells ya got hanging off'a ya'll!"

"WHAT?" Harry and I both yelled at the same time. Valerius just mumbled more obscenities about noisy humans not letting deserving creatures sleep.

"Whadda you mean spells?" With that I could feel the magic I was attempting to grasp slip away and disappear down the deep dark well that was my magical core. The Cloak Guy did a jig again, okay that is getting very annoying.

"Welllllll," the Cloak Guy suddenly switched into a serious mood, "Ya both got trackin' and monitor charms on ya. Ya wan' 'em off or what?" I looked at him, I think he sounded sincere, but I couldn't be sure...

"Retta conf'rence." Harry and I did a sort of mini-team huddle, like those American 'football' players did on the TV. I personally think that (A/N: no offense to anyone) calling a television 'the Telly' was a bit juvenile and retarded to me.

"Harry," I sighed exasperatedly, "come on, this guy seems a bit bonkers don'tcha think?"

"Yeah, but," my brother paused, then grew somber, "what if he's right? We'll end up sent back if there're really t'ackers on us." Sadly, I can see same logic, so Harry and I faced Cloak Guy.

"Fine wha'dya wan' us ta do?" I huffed, if we had to do this I don't have to like it.

"Kay ya gotta go to a certain location, ya have ta look around and that's it." He was all cheery again, I think this guy's bipolar or something.

"That's it?" Harry exclaimed.

"Yep." Cloak Guy's mouth was visible and he was grinning in an ear to ear grin. Then he took out a wand, "Okay I've never done this before so it may or may not sting."

"Wha'd'ya mean never done this befo-!" Yelled Harry before we were surrounded by a sort of blue light, then it turned darker. Is there a such thing as black light? 'Cause that's the only thing that could even hope to begin describing it.

Suddenly I felt a tug on my spine and a slight tingle. Soon the air began to ripple with magic, the 'dark light' began to engulfed us both...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

At Hogwarts...(3rd person POV)

Albus Dumbledore is a powerful wizard, he wasn't worried about anything right now, right? Wrong.

Today had been another day of future conditioning for one little Hayden Potter, a mini-beginner's spell here and there not too much. The boy had already picked up on the 'Levi' spell, though when his magic reserves grew it would render the spell unusable to him, the spell was teaching him how to use magic. Even if it was at the smallest, miniscule degree.

The Headmaster had just recently checked the monitors on both the Boy-Who-Lived and then checked the monitors he had placed on his siblings just months ago. His face turned a rather bland shade of white at what he saw. The monitors began to flash with red smoke, which alerted him that they were no longer in Surrey, then there was black smoke and then nothing.

His face was that of grandfatherly worry. Soon he had grabbed some floo powder, thrown it in the fireplace, and said,

"Potter Manor." And with a flash of fire the Headmaster was gone.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Lily was playing with her son, just a week ago she had made James sleep on the couch for getting Hayden a broom and letting him ride it, even if it was a toy broom, she felt that Hayden was too young to go broom riding...

Brooms, she remembered one of the few times her and James had taken all their children out. At Diagon Alley she remembered her youngest son pressing his face to the glass where they sold Quidditch(sp?) brooms and supplies. Little Harrison had even asked,

in very few, four-year old words, for a broom. She had said when he was older maybe.

Thinking about her youngest child made her think about her oldest as well. Her daughter was always quiet, sometimes too quiet. She's never even spoken a single word to both of her parents, they've never even heard her first word. It made Lily feel guilty, she vowed that when her babies got home she'd smother them with so much love they'd shy away from embarrassment. But the one thing that made her feel worse was the recent confrontation between James and the other two Marauders. It made her want to just apparate right there and take her babies home...

Flashback...

"What do you mean you left them there?" Sirius shouted furiously.

"They're fine, Dumbledore said-" James was cut off by Sirius.

"Them? Leaving them at the Malfoys would be a better fate!"

"Paddy, we're going to get them soon..." James's voice trailed off nervously, he had been guilty from the start but he trusted the Headmaster's advice, besides, it wasn't as if Harrison and Harrietta were going to stay at his sister-in-law's forever...

"Going to get them?" This only succeeded in further infuriating the enraged Godfather. Remus Lupin was watching the scene with a thoughtful look on his face. Of course he couldn't understand why James or Lily would send Harry and Harrietta away. To the Dursleys especially, they hated magic like it was a plague, why send them there of all places?

Lily could only watch as her husband got yelled out by his two best friends. Remus joined in halfway through the whole thing. When Albus flooded in they began to chew him out for starting the whole mess, though he did say that it would give the siblings life experience. Hah, that's a laugh...

But the Headmaster soothed, or at least warded off the brunt of both Marauders' anger. Saying that in a few months or so Harry and Harrietta would be back, happy and healthy. How right could that

claim be? Well they were certainly better off than before at the Dursleys. Happier? Definitely. Just in a way they didn't expect...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

The Headmaster of Hogwarts was at a bit of a loss, according to the magical monitors, James and Lily's daughter and youngest son were either missing or dead. The monitors had indicated that the charms and wards had been both breached and destroyed by some type of magic.

'Dark arts perhaps?' Thought the Headmaster worriedly, perhaps his chosen course of action was not the best...

(A/N: Crowd, plz feel free to yell, "News from the file marked "DUH!" Also finally! –sorry for the interruption...)

"Headmaster?" It was Lily, she looked up from her napping son. Albus took a breath then attempted to drop the bomb.

"Where's James?" He started.

"In the kitchen, why?" Lily tried not to, but she couldn't shake off a feeling of dread...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

With James...

"I have some bad news..." The Headmaster started, boy was that an understatement...

Later...

"You said they'd be safe!" Dumbledore got his own chewing out by Lily; James had gone to the Ministry to report his children missing after convincing from Lily. Lily was angry, and sad two of her babies were missing. Immediately she remembered how little time she'd even had with Harry. Her time with Harrietta, almost non-existent . She didn't even know what her own daughter's voice sounded like, she felt angry and sad tears sting her eyes. Soon she had grabbed her wand and flooded out with a flash of flames.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Back to Harry and Retta(in Harrietta's POV...)

"Hey ya know?" Cloak-Guy commented as the dark mist began to clear up, "ya both got some sorta magical block thingie on ya, want me ta remove that to?"

"Well you haven't killed us yet," Harry's voice dripped with sarcasm, "whatever, go 'head, let 'er rip!" Then I felt a pain in my gut and the base of my spine. It hurt worse than when Uncle Vernon beat my brother and I, it was like someone hit me with a battering ram like in the history books. When the "dark light" cleared and the pain subsided, I found myself and my brother keeled over on the floor of the passenger car.

"It. May. STING?" I snapped angrily. I stood up now that the pain was gone, I could feel my blood boil, how dare this damn (censored) (censored) hurt my brother and me?

"Weeeeelllll," Cloak-Guy shrugged his shoulders, "I didn't kill ya, and well," he laughed nervously, "I just did ya'll a favor. Try callin' your magic!"

Reluctantly I complied I could feel small amounts of magic, more than usual surge through me. Leaving me with a tingly, energetic feeling, like I could run a marathon.

"Hey cool!" Harry exclaimed rather loudly, "I k'n call my magic so much easier now! Hey Retta what say ya?"

"Okay, so we can call it a little faster than usual, how do we know ya really got these monitors, offa us for real?" I was really skeptical about this...

"Look I'm not foolin' I didn' know that the spell was gonna hurt 'kay? It's the first time I've used it gosh darnit! Plus ya had this weird magical block thingie on ya; ya want me to have just left it there?" Cloak-Guy waved his hands in the air... Wave 'em like ya just don't care, gah I lost my train of thought!

"Okay, where do ya wan' us ta go?" Harry inquired smoothly cutting through the tension.

"Okay, uno momento por favor," Cloak-Guy reached into his robes and started fumbling around in his pockets, muttering curses and obscenities under his breath when he couldn't find what he was looking for.

"Is this gonna take all day?" I quipped snappishly.

"Ah Hah!" He pulled out a road map and smiled like a cat who caught the mouse. "Okay I want you two," Valerius hissed dangerously at being left out, Cloak-Guy sweat-dropped, "eh, heh, I mean you three, gotta go to a place called New Kurkmire. You'll know what to do from there." He pointed at a circled point on the road map and suddenly did a cartwheel towards the door.

"Wait!" Harry called after him, "what do ya mean by that?" Then Cloak-Guy stopped cartwheeling and started fumbling around in his pockets, again...

"Where did I put those things?" Then he threw his hands up in defeat, "GAH! I can never find ANYTHING in this robe!" A few minutes and a few hundred curses later he came up with three small vials filled with some sort of potion?

"What's that?" Harry and I chorused.

"Well you'll see when ya drink it." Then Cloak-Guy smiled almost wistfully at us, "Good luck..."

"But what-" Harry started, then Cloak-Guy suddenly disappeared with a sudden

Crack!

Then there was no noise apart from the train itself, Harry was staring quietly at the vials, turning them over in his hands carefully.

"So..." Harry looked up across the aisle at me, I still hadn't sat down yet.

"We're off to New Kurkmire!" I declared out loud.

/Does somebody want tell me what's (censored) going on?/ Valerius snapped, I can't believe he hadn't spoken sooner though. He looked at Harry and myself with an expectant gaze.

/Basically, that dude made sure people can't find us and helped us, now all he wants us to do is go to a place called New Kurkmire then he'll leave us alone./

/Hello? Anyone home?/Valerius was sarcastic now, /Why are we going there?/

Harry scratched the back of his head and smiled uneasily, /Heh, heh, I don't really know he never said./

/I thought snakes were supposed to be polite and respectful./ I smirked as I said this and Valerius just tossed his head.

/Ah, phooey to all that (censored) decorum (censored) crap! I've had enough of it, I'd rather burn and raze the ground in a fiery explossssion of molten lava! Those ssssstifling rulesss and regulationssss can (censored) go sssssspontaneously combusssst!/ Valerius ranted and hissed vehemently, /It'sss all a conssspiracy to control us! Well I'm a rebel, I'm a pirate, I'm Valeriussss the Renegade!/ I had a straight face for about two seconds, then I lost control and fell to the floor clutching my stomach while laughing. Harry burst out laughing a few seconds later, and Valerius huffed indignantly.

Crack!

Suddenly Cloak-Guy had apparated into the train car again.

"Sorry!" He tossed Harry a road map, "Forgot to leave this! See ya!" Then he disappeared with a loud crack!

/What a loony./ Muttered Valerius, then Harry began to crack up, which caused me to burst out laughing...

A/N: Hey plz review! It's not that difficult! I'm already writing the next chap don't worry. I wrote this chap in my Marine science class ya know? I'm taking a risk here to type these, please appreciate the risk

I take to update this story. Now REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! I want at LEAST 8 reviews for this chap okay?

Chapter 11: Road Chronicles: A Crossing of Paths

?’s POV...

'What now?' The tall people are looming again, outside my little room. They wear white, long coats and odd cloths hanging from their necks. I had a white shirt and shorts on, the room was white. The walls were white, the floor and the ceiling is white too. But it's always dark for some reason, but when lights were turned on, it was blinding.

"-switch the subject to the cryogenics research from this wing." The voice was deep, and was a bit, how should I say excited?

"But that subject's property of the Mental Research facility! You can't just steal one of our most successful test subjects!" Cried an angry feminine voice.

"It's an order from the higher-ups." I wonder if it's possible to hear a Lab-Coat smirking. They always talked about the "Higher-Ups" giving orders and telling them to do things. I think the hierarchy went like this...

Superior

Higher-Ups

High Lab-Coats

Lesser Lab-Coats

Techs

"YOU CAN'T JUST DO THAT!" Yelled another voice madly, this one was higher but still masculine.

"Order from the higher-ups, finish the psychological energy research experiments scheduled for a month from now, then it's to be moved to the Cryogenics Research & Testing wing." The voice took on a haughty tone, "Got it?" The other two Lab-Coats grumbled and the door slid open to the side. The light was blinding.

"Move it 00578!" The Lab-Coat snapped as he grabbed me by the arm and shoved me forward into the blinding light, and I fell face first into the cold, not very soft floor.

"Hey watch it!" The lady Lab-Coat hit the other Lab-Coat in the shoulder. "That thing's worth twenty times what you get in a year! Handle it with care you imbecile!"

"Alright, alright, sheesh, women..." The male Lab-Coat's voice trailed off.

"I heard that!" The woman snapped angrily hitting the man over the head with a clipboard. Then I was nudged forward and I walked down the hall, I think I looked back and saw someone else, the older boy had black hair and eyes and was being dragged to the "Room." The "Room" was a place they'd take you when you were really, really bad, or when they thought you could progress no further, though I really don't get what that meant...

'Still hurts from other day...' The lady Lab-Coat led me into the lab with a thirteen on the door. I'm being strapped to a chair, with wires in my arms and head, oh whoopee...

"Now," Began a cold voice behind a glass wall, "energy, use it."

I really didn't understand what the guy was talking about, but I knew today was gonna hurt like a, well, that word I can't remember someone saying...

"Sir," another voice sounded, "the subject's brain waves haven't deviated from their normal state," the male voice paused, "what voltage should I set?" My muscles tensed, today was going to be painful...

"Okay 00578," the Lab-Coat's voice was sickly sweet, I don't like it, "energy, use it." I never get what they want me to do, if I did then maybe my life wouldn't be so painful!

"Brain wave patterns are still normal sir." Said a Tech, crud...

"Voltage increased by twenty percent, on your word sir." Came a female Tech, I think the man behind the glass just nodded and the Tech flipped a switch.

Pain, it hurts like being trampled or burnt or something, every nerve in my body feels like it on fire, so I just did what any normal person does in when faced with a situation like this, I screamed.

It seemed to never end, it feels like hours have already passed but in reality it's only been two and a half minutes; seriously, I counted.

"Brain wave patterns show no abnormal anomalies sir." Crowed another Tech as the first Tech flipped the switch off and the pain died down, not by much though...

"Fine double it for today," said the Behind-the-Glass Lab-coat, oh no, he sounds annoyed, this ain't good, bad things, bad things, bad things...

"Sir that could damage it's-" The Tech started, only to be rudely interrupted.

"Were you trained to question orders?" The Tech immediately shut up at the Lab-Coat's harsh, yet eerily cold voice. She turned a funny-looking knob thing, and placed a hand on the switch I can see the Tech's eyes, that Tech always had a different look than anyone else here at this place. She's always sad, and she's always nicer than other the Lab-Coats and Techs who have to over-see experiments.

In the Lab she is Sad-eyes, the one always assigned to pull the switch while I sit in this chair with wires sticking into me. But my thoughts were again interrupted by the Lab-coat's unfeeling voice stabbing through the train of my thoughts...

"The energy, use it." I still don't know what they want me to do! I wish I did, well actually I do know what they want, but I don't know how to do it. It's like an odd weightless feeling, or maybe the 'energy' feels weightless, I don't have a clue.

Only thing is I can't use it, like the Lab-Coats want me to. Today, like almost every other day, is painful. Then my thoughts went boom as my body was blasted full of electricity again for not complying well enough to the standards the Lab-Coats wanted. I just want the hurt to go away...

"Change in brain patterns sir!" Cried the Tech sitting at the monitor joyfully.

"Good." The man behind the glass sounded pleased, they turned the switch again with less pain than the last.

"Not enough energy 00578," His voice was cruel, "again." I'm too scared I don't wanna try it, if I do it still hurts...

"Turn it up." I could hear disdain along with the cruelty of the voice. Flip went the switch and electricity shot through my little body, and I screamed...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Later...

I'm sprawled on the cold floor, it still hurts, and I'm not even in the chair! I wanna curl up in a corner, but it hurts too much to move. Even my insides hurt! It's dark 'cause the lights were turned off, it's lights-out time, wanna but can't sleep. It stinks...

My door's opening, what do the lab-coats want now? It hurts enough, wait no, it's Morphine! (Pronounced: More-fee-nay)

Morphine was the only kind worker at the entire facility! She was always more nice, she was the Tech with sad eyes, who was always bossed around and stuff. She had tall with not-so-short-but-not-long-either brown hair that was always pulled up in a ponytail by an orange hair tie. She has something in her hand, a syringe needle!

It was dark but I could see her outline, barely. She knelt next to me and stuck the needle into my arm, and after a few minutes I felt myself relax and the pain faded. (A/N: I'm not a medical student so I had to look up morphine & its effects online. I only know for sure that it's a pain killer okay?)

"Go to sleep now little one." I find Morphine's voice comforting, it's much softer than any other Tech or Lab-Coat I've seen.

"Don' wanna." Normally, I adore sleep. When I sleep, I dream and I'm in a strange weird place, and it's always filled with something like

gas but it's all wet, like water. (A/N: He doesn't know what mist is, so don't ask please.)

"Come on, you hafta sleep."

"Tell me 'bout stuff." I looked up at her as she sighed, I loved the stories she told. Stuff about things that flew, and plants not growing in planters and pots, and a big shiny light bulb that gave light to everyone! I want to hear another story!

"Well there are building's where they teach little children jus' like you." Morphine started, she never spoke loudly, it was like those lullaby things Morphine told me about...

"Cool." I muttered.

"Yeah, they teach you how to read, write, do math, and stuff like that. Then later in the day they'll let kids out to go play outside, there's a playground to play on and-" But I cut her off.

"What's a playground?"

"It's like the obstacle course," I think I felt my gut twist as I remembered when I almost died in that course, I was too small and too slow... So much red... "Not like the one here though." Morphine amended quickly.

"What's it like 'den?"

"It's got pretty colors sometimes, and it's safe. No time limit except when you hafta go back inside to learn-"

"Why'd I need that? Ya taught me tha' stuff 'dey teach and I get plenty 'a exercise, sorta..." Then I yawned, I was getting drowsy now, I could feel my eyelids drooping.

"But some kids don't have people like me who teach 'em by themselves. So they do it in classes of say thirty kids." Morphine's lips quirked up in a slight, but still sad smile. She patted my head and ruffled my hair, and are things getting hazy or is it just me?

"Enough stories for now kid." She always left, I don't want her to leave. Then she turned around away from the closed door. She

traced the circular burns that were along my hairline under my bangs, where the wires were always attached to...

"S'not y'ur fault ya know." I was half asleep now, and Morphine's voice was even softer.

"Sleep."

"Fn..." Then I drifted into the warm fuzziness of sleep... But as when she left I almost heard something akin to a mutter, but I know she didn't say it out loud...

"I'm sorry..."

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Later...

I tried not to be bored, I really did. But really this was much better than being in the chair I supposed. Then there was a big fuss outside so I listened through my door.

"Damn, this brat puts up quite a fight." Gritted a male voice bitterly. They were holding someone down who, by the sound of it was kicking and screaming profanities. A young girly voice...\

"Lemme go you (censored) dang son of a (censored) (censored) jerks!" She screamed, then another voice gave a yell.

"OW! That brat just bit me!" Then I heard the sound of a body being thrown against a metal wall, then the shutting of the reinforced steel door. My new neighbor is real silent now...

Maybe I should say hello? She could end up being a crazy already...

"(Censored) damn (censored) (censored) jerks!" The girl seemed to be yelling, this is going to be a ton of fun. I suppose...

"What's yar number?" Then she was silent, maybe she's been in the mind warp or something but also may-

"Number?" Her voice was calmer but still angry.

"Yeah," I answered matter-o-factly, "like, well, I'm 00578 this is the mental research devel'pment wing."

"Well I DON'T wanna be here." She grumbled from her small room next to mine.

"Well don' get yo'r hope up. Nobody ev'r leaves 'cept when ya get um what 's the word?" I felt my face screw in concentration what was that word? GAH! I can never remember things well, WHY?

"Let go?" She offered. Aha! Now I remember!

"Term'nat'd." After that an uncomfortable silence followed.

"Do you have a name?"

"I jus' tol' ya," what did I not just introduce myself? "I'm 00578."

"Tha's not a name, it's a number." Her tone was flat and emotionless.

"Wha's your name then?" I could feel some pain rise in my throat, I think the shock therapy is going so well with my throat...

"Well you can call me Ret if ya want."

"Fine, why not a number?" I'm curious, maybe she's like Morphine; did she come from outside the facility?

"Cuz ya jus' don' name people numbers. It lacks or'iginal'ty, ever'one d'serves a name." Wow, did she mean me too?

"I don't have one."

"Pick one for yours'lf then." Ret answered.

"Um," I felt my cheeks flush a little bit, man I'm jus' not used to talkin' ta people! So I ended up muttering, "don't know any..." I heard her sigh, but not like Morphine, more like something else I couldn't understand.

"How 'bout I say names and then you pick the one ya like best?" Ret suggested.

"Kay."

"Jus' one thing," She said, "how in crimony do we get outta here?"

"Nobody ev'r leaves." I'm confused now, is it possible to leave? I'll file away that thought for later...

"Well I don't wanna stick around this dump, I gotta brother to find." Ret snapped then I heard a soft hitting noise, I think she tried to ram the door. Yeah right, it would be seriously awesome if she could've knocked the door down though...

"Owww..." Ret muttered. I really couldn't see what she was doing because, well hey she's in another room.

"Told ya."

"Oh shut up." I don't think she was mad, I hope she isn't mad, or crazy...

"So ya got a brother, I think I know what those are..." I felt my voice trail off uncertainly.

"Ya don't know what a brother is?" Ret's voice sounded suspicious.

"Yeah their born in from the same mom right?"

"Okay you do know what they are, and yeah I have a brother, those jerks in white took me here and I don't know wh're here eve' is. So I got separated from 'im. But I don't think they nabbed him..." I don't get it, when you're separated from someone it's permanent.

"Not much chance 'n 'scape happ'nin' ya know." I answered a bit solemnly.

"John?"

"Huh?" What's she going on about now?

"The name, do ya like the name?" Ret sounded annoyed now.

"Not really." I shook my head, though I know she can't see it.

"Scott?"

"Nope." Then silence.

"Zack?"

"Nuh, uh." Oh boy, this's gonna be a long day...

A/N: Hey peoples! YAY for reviews! Remember 8 reviews minimum! I liked writing this chap, I'm writing this during AP Human Geography class so be very grateful please. Guessed who Ret is yet? Yeah all will be explained in the next chap. Yeah I know I needed to introduce another character who's very crucial to the plot, so please review and tell me what you think. No you can't vote on a name for 00578 'cause I already have one planned. But I want ya'll to tell me what you think and give ideas if you want to, they help Rose(my muse) think. PLZ REVIEW! 8 REVIEWS MINIMUM!

Chapter 12: Road Chronicles: Of Run-Ins & Psyching Up

Harrietta's POV...

'00578,' I thought to myself, 'who names people with numbers?' So far, for about three days, besides going to the bathroom, eating, and sleeping, one, no actually two things have crossed my mind...

I. Am. Bored. & The world is dang blurry, WHERE ARE MY GLASSES?

"Ezekiel?" That kid and I have been doing this for hours, me saying a name to see if he likes it. But he hasn't picked one yet. I've never seen him but I think he's about my age. He sure sounds like it. Usually our 'game' gets interrupted when the jerks in white coats come and take him somewhere. After they take him back, '578 never speaks for a few hours. I can hear him whimpering in pain, which makes me wonder what these people have planned for me. I felt myself shudder, that's not gonna be a pretty picture...

"Nope." The boy answered after a while.

I felt my train of thought drift in another direction, I had to get out of here and find Harry, but wait... Was this just a run of bad luck? Or did Cloak-Guy plan this? Next time I see 'im I'm giving him a piece of my mind! Soon I began making escape plans but none of them seemed even remotely workable. Crud monkeys...

"What about Horace?" I said absentmindedly.

"No way." Gah just pick a name already!

"Joey?" Then there was a hopeful silence.

"Nuh, uh." Then I sighed and proceeded to bang my head against the steel door. "Your gonna kill brain cells like tha' ya know." He said with a concerned tone.

"Shut up." I grumbled and the resounding bang of my head against cold reinforced steel could be heard echoing through the empty halls...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

Okay I'm worried. For the past two weeks Retta and I have been dodging and hitching every ride that we could get. We almost got caught a couple of times by either police or "well-meaning" people who wanted to send us to some orphanage, like that would ever happen. Along the way we'd practice magic, it came a lot easier than it did before and so far we could make small things float in one spot for about forty seconds. If I wanted to move it, that time was cut by half. I need more practice...

But that really doesn't compare to the problem at hand. Retta was missing! She never goes anywhere without tellin' me where she's goin', so we can always find each other. Now I don't where the heck she is!

/Valerius,/ I saw his head poke out from one of my jacket sleeves, /do you have a clue where Retta could be?/

/How ssssshould I know? I wassssss with you the whole time!/
Valerius snapped, but even though I hadn't known him long I could tell he was at least a bit worried.

I wasn't as hungry as usual, all the candy from the theatre had already run out between Retta and I at least a week ago. This morning when I went looking for Retta, I was wary and jumpy about pretty much everything and everyone around me. It just felt a lot more lonely without Retta here either, cursing, making a witty remark or trying to cook up another plan with me to feed us both and maybe get some money.

/Valerius, could you go look for her?/I asked in the his language.

/I would if I could,/ His lava colored eyes shown against the dreary atmosphere, /but it'sssss too cold for me, I'd freezzzzzze to death./ His hissing voice held a depressed tone.

/Okay, what do we do then? Where should we look now?/ I said to him.

/Why not jussssst asssssk sssssomebody? It'sssss not like white hair isssss easssssy to misssssss you know./ Valerius then

proceeded to slither up and curl around my neck and shoulders, it was around mid November. It wasn't that cold, maybe it was just a small cold spell...

/Ya know, you need to learn to understand my language. It'll sound weird to people if I'm talking in another language to my shirt.../ I muttered under my breath.

/Do I havvvvve too?/ Valerius whined.

/Yes! You do! It's not even that cold right now, you're warmer than I am and I'm the one with a jumper on!/ Okay Valerius and I have been arguing for the past half-hour and it was getting old. We had to go looking for Retta.

/Fine. I'll learn the language you overgrown monkeysssss speak,/ The midnight black snake slithered down my sleeve and onto the floor, soon he slithered out the broken doorway muttering, /when I find the brat I'm givin' a good piecccccce of my mind to her! Damn the floor's cold!/ If Retta wasn't missing, I would've laughed.

Soon I stepped out into the world, I got me a sister to find!

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Two Days later: Midnight (0000 Hrs.)

Morphine's POV...

The walls all look the same, no matter how long you work here. I shouldn't feel the twinge in my chest every time I see experiments performed. Or when I saw yet another "test subject" terminated, or more bluntly put, put to sleep. There are worse ways to die here, sometimes they left in the same room with some of the more, rabid test subjects...

But I'm rambling again. I'm sometimes known as Morphine, by every last test subject who lives here. Crytex is the front name of this place. I know that today's the day, it was all or nothing...

The day Crytex has one hell of an awakening!

It was already around midnight and I'd already slipped sedatives into the security guard's drinks. I even set up a small power surge that was going to shut down all electronics and security systems. Yes I said systems, multiple systems with different access codes and blocks. I've spent at least three years of my life learning and memorizing the entire facility for this operation to take place, I pray to whoever would listen in that big blue sky that I don't botch this one.

It would be disastrous.

'Okay,' I took a deep breath and booted up the program, 'I can do this.' The screen blinked to life and showed a blue ready screen as I reached into my pocket and pulled out a small, red-tinted disk. I stuck it into the drive and waited, then the screen flashed.

Loading Complete.

I punched away at the keyboard, quietly. The screen flashed again,

T.D.C. Virus ready, do you wish to proceed?

I could feel my heart hammering wildly in my throat, though that's not physically possible. I almost lost my nerve right then, but then my mind was assaulted with every image of what Crytex has and is doing. I remembered that little kid; he was only two when he came here. Ebony black hair and eyes, pale skin and bruises, then he was thrown into this hell. I don't know why but, for some reason that burned me. It made me think of my memories long forgotten, or at least whatever scraps of them I have left.

I don't think I had felt anything for years until that kid came to the facility. He didn't even have a name, just the Crytex system number assigned him, but he'd affected this place more than anyone or anything ever has.

That kid who had shock therapy every single week, I think they even lobotomized him once. Some research and development, it's torture, pure and simple. I sighed, I never used to think "traitorous" thoughts like these until a few years ago. I still remember how we both met...

Flashback...

"Tech-144," the scientist shot me a disapproving look at my slow reaction, I looked up immediately.

"Sir?"

"We have another one," He gestured toward a too small child standing at his feet, he shoved the boy toward me and turned to leave as he finished, "get it through the system, standardize it, and make at least healthy enough not to die during the first test."

I was already used to be spoken in that manner, jobs for Techs ranged from regular heavy lifting, repairing things, and simple front maintenance work to experimentation assistance, computer operations, and other things. Techs were either cheap labor who hadn't a clue of what was really going on or they were like me...

But that's a story for another day.

I led that kid down the hall and was about to leave him with the other Techs, as I left he looked up at me. It was like looking into twin black tunnels, but they seemed to hold something, something I haven't seen in so long...

Something lively...

I shook my head and turned away, that kid was different, but I could pin it. He hadn't spoken the entire time, usually they would blather about something or other...

"Wh' n'me?" His small voice was soft, almost as if he never spoke. I could've chosen to ignore him, yet I decided to answer, despite myself.

"I'm called Tech-144."

"C'I." We were silent the rest of the way...

End Flashback...

I didn't see that kid again until three months later, but my thoughts had begun to nag me again...

Flashback...

I was assigned to feed the experiments in the Mental Research and Development wing today. I carried out my duty, then I saw a face.

Black hair, pale skin, and a small and still too thin body. I could see burns that ran in a line near his hairline, those familiar dot shaped scars that were about a half-inch in diameter; he had six.

I wasn't even sure for how long I just stared at him, maybe for five minutes or an hour. But soon his eyes cracked open and he stared up at me.

What really chilled my soul, or what's left of it, wasn't the fact that I was feeling emotions again for the first time in years, the fact that one little kid was getting through to me, or the thought of anyone knowing I was thinking about things a Tech shouldn't think about; it was that kid's eyes.

When he looked at me, his eyes were empty. Dead.

End Flashback...

Those eyes going from lively to dead in two months flat, from a two year. It really shouldn't have bothered me, or maybe it was supposed to. Soon I ended up sneaking morphine from the supply closet to test subjects, and someone started calling me Morphine (Mor-fee-nay). I even got to talk to that kid after a while, months later he actually looked alive again. But what really did it was when he asked me something...

"C'n y'o b' mah Mommy?"

I really didn't have anything to say to that, but for months it did nothing but nag me. As I continued as Morphine, I could find myself thinking for myself more often. If I got caught doing anything, I could be terminated, or worse, I could face reprogramming.

But back to the matter at hand, my hand hovered over the enter key, once I hit that button there's no going back and if I'm caught, I really don't want to think about that...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

I've been looking for at least a few days and still no sign of Retta, then Valerius slithered up, he had something in his mouth.

'Wait,' I thought, 'those are Retta's glasses!' She never goes anywhere without them for the same reasons I do, we can't see much of anything without them.

/Don't worry nessesstling,/ I glared at Valerius, he calls Retta and I that all the time now, /Sssshe's tough, sssshe can take care of hersssself./

"She'd better..." I muttered under my breath. Then someone ran into me, well more like crashed.

"Crap is that you kid-I-met-on-the-train?" It was Cloak-Guy, he was out of breath and wheezing.

"Where's my sister?" I was maybe jumping to conclusions but, "what have you done with her?"

"Me?" He had a hand to his chest, "I have done nothing, I was coming to warn you guys! Your sister isn't with ya?" He then started to fidget nervously with his black cloak muttering, "oh, man this is bad, bad, bad..."

"Well?" I asked expectantly.

"Follow me, we have a rescue mission!" Then he grabbed my hand and half dragged me out the warehouse doorway, which didn't have a door. I think I heard Valerius complain about 'too many rushing monkeys' or something like that...

'Wait a minute!' It suddenly hit me, 'RESCUE MISSION? What happened?'

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Morphine's POV...

'This is for that kid, and all the lives you've ruined.' I could care less about what happened to me, these kids... No-one deserved this, except those Crytex bastards.

I felt the energy those Crytex bastards were obsessed with, build up from within me, ready to blast anything in my way...

I hit the enter key.

Then all hell broke loose...

A/N: Oooooo, EVIL CLIFFIE! I'm so evil... Heh, heh, heh... (smiles deviously) Hi here's the chapter! Sorry if the last one was a bit confuzzling! PLZ forgive me that one was a bit rushed! What do you all think of this chap? 8 REVIEWS MINIMUM! I will update as soon as I can, my spring break is over though, so I might be a tad slower... PLZ REVIEW! ROSE LUVS THEM! I just introduced new characters and stuff, plz tell me what you think of them. Tell you what though since it's the last day of my Spring break I'll update anyway, even though I only have 7 reviews for the last chapter, plz why must I beg for reviews? WHY? PLZ DON'T make me BEG!

FLAMES: Shall be used to roast marshmallows to make smores for myself, my cousin, and our muses.

NOTE: I accept constructive criticism, I want people to point out if I'm there are huge plot holes that I haven't explained(unless I'm explaining later) or if I'm getting mary sue-ish with my characters. Friendly advice is welcome, I want my writing to improve as I keep writing.

Me: (in a cheesy announcer voice) Will Harry and Cloak-Guy get there in time? Will Harrietta ever find a name for 00578? Will Morphine's plan work? What's going to happen next? Is Crytex going down? Well, stay tuned and find out in the next chapter of "Maelstrom Twins"!

Chapter 13: Lab Chronicles: Discoveries of an Elemental Nature

00578's POV...

'Where am I?' It's cold, but at least it doesn't hurt so much now. I can hear muffled voices from somewhere...

"Subject's... not... time..."

"... time.... few thousand volts....up...."

"..... is it.... aware....us?"

"No...commence.....process.....-s"

"Won't.....stuck....deep-freeze....?"

There were Lab-Coats standing near the table someone was lying on, everything looked like it was colored in different shades of grey. The figures all looked so, fuzzy... There wasn't much detail to anything. But I feel oddly calm, and peaceful, it's nice...

There was an IV and some other various wires that the person was attached to, there was other stuff too, but I don't know what those are...

The person on the table was very still, if it weren't for the monitors then I'd think the kid was dead or something...

Then the Lab-Coat picked up something, and pressed it to the person's chest.

"Clear." I could vaguely feel something pressing against my chest, the sensation was like a horrible, sizzling sensation. The calm numbness was going away, being replaced by pain. I feel as if I was being dragged back to somewhere from where I was standing. Then the lights flickered and I felt the jolt, turn coldish, wait a minute is that me lying on that table?

'Am I dead?' My head felt hazy and my limbs felt so, heavy. Like I wanted to move, but my limbs felt too heavy to respond.

I feel hot, and so cold at the same time. I hate it, I want it to stop. I want it to stop, I want it to stop...

'I want it to, STOP!' Suddenly I heard a shattering noise near me, and everything was suddenly very, very cold.

I opened my eyes and was blinded by the light, it's too bright! I don't like it!

"Freeeeezzzze." I heard myself rasp out. There was a cracking, glass-ish sound, then everything went dark...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

"Slow down, I can't feel mah feet!" I yelled as Cloak-Guy practically dragged me down a forest path. We had already taken a trip over roof-tops and a bus. Though no-one seemed to notice us, it was like being invisible, it's kinda cool.

"Can't," Cloak-Guy muttered, as he suddenly hefted me onto his back and grabbed Retta's backpack, which I happened to be holding; he shrunk it and stuffed it into his pocket. "Not much time. At least I don't think..." His voice trailed off into a bunch of mumbling that I can't understand.

"Hold up." I finally wriggled out of his iron grip and planted my feet into the ground, "I'm not going anywhere until you tell me wha's goin' on 'round here."

"Fine," He gave a sigh and calmed down. "Look, in short, I think your sister mighta been kidnapped."

"What?"

"Yep, ya see. I kinda forgot about some bad dudes who wander round these parts and I was gonna warn ya to take a detour but it's too late now-"

"Ya mean mah sister got ki'napped by s'me we'rdo psychos an' ya jus' forgot ta tell us 'bout this?" Even Valerius seemed to join me as I ranted at a guy who was probably many years older than I am.

"Yeah, weeeelll..." He scratched the back of his head. "we gotta hurry anyways, don't have time ta explain everything right now!"

"Fine. But ya owe me an expl'nation..." I muttered as he let me ride piggy-back, which I'll admit is kinda fun 'cause of how fast he was running.

"Dang Retta," I muttered as Cloak-Guy started leaping through trees, following the road, "if it's no' one thing th'n it's another..."

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Third Person POV...

The entire facility was in chaos. All equipment and every electrical system within the Crytex facility was going haywire. Morphine stood in the small control room, she sighed, this was it, then she felt for the energy again.

'Damn, I better not mess this up...' She thought to herself as she let loose a wild pulse of energy, causing the lights to go out. It was black as pitch and there was yelling, crashing, and explosions of crashing systems and electrical devices.

"Crap," She huffed as she leaned an arm against the wall, "used too much energy."

"Check the control room." Came a voice from the other side of the room.

'Oh crap.' Morphine thought as she scanned the room quickly for any possible hiding spots. 'Aha!' She had an ingenious idea!

Then the door swung open, revealing two Crytex scientists. Morphine schooled her expression to one of someone completely loyal to the facility. She had already removed the disk that had contained the virus and pocketed it.

"What's going on here?" Snapped one of the scientists, he was tall and thin and held a clipboard tightly to his chest.

"S-" she almost gave herself away, "Stupid Tech was a leak! This one's a defect." Morphine spat as contemptuously as she could manage, but damn, on the inside she was shaking like a leaf. If this didn't go well, if they didn't buy it, still not a pretty picture.

"Fine then," Grumbled the scientist in an annoyed manner, "you and you," he pointed to the Techs that were accompanying him, "take the traitor to be reprogrammed." They did as ordered and dragged the unconscious security guard out.

"Sir what should we do?" Morphine asked in an even voice.

"Get this place back in working order, you numbskull!" He shouted irritably in the almost darkness of the control room as he stormed out. When they all left, Morphine's shoulders sagged in relief.

'I can't believe all I had to do was switch lab-coats and nametags with someone!' She thought to herself as she made her way through the darkness to the Cryogenics research wing...

'I hope I'm not too late...'

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

With ?

'Cold...' A lone figure stood among the icy remains of what was once a lab, spikes of frost blue rose from the ground sharp as knives. The unconscious forms along the ground did nothing to catch the figure's attention.

'Where... am... I?' Movement! It rushed toward him, pointed something toward him. Yelled something, disrupted the beautiful silence as he gazed at his own work. How dare this being mar his work and yell things at him?

"Baaaaack..." He held out his palm and threw an ice cold sphere of energy, the being in a white coat was blasted back into the far wall, thirty feet away. He walked toward his fallen opponent, first he studied the man with a curious gaze, then a smirk crept onto the frosty figure's features.

"Freeeeeeezze..." He blew out a cloud of icy breath over the unconscious figure, and the scientist was covered by a sheet of ice.

'Too... warm... want... colder...' His thoughts were slow and dragged out as he felt the temperature drop to something more comfortable. He felt oddly calm and peaceful, nothing to bother him, but the silence was broken by a voice.

"Kid!" A voice whispered from down the hall, "Where are ya kid, can't leave without ya, ya know?" The voice was familiar almost like, someone he knew?

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Morphine's POV...

'Damn!' I thought irritably as I turned the corner and nearly tripped over an unconscious person... 'Wait a sec, unconscious? What the hell did I miss?'

Then I almost slipped, it had suddenly gotten so much colder, like by twenty degrees, IT .IS. COLD. Then I could see a short figure, through the icy blue mist that lay thick in the air. But I can barely see an outline of someone, someone short...

'The kid!' Then I whispered, "Kid! Where are ya kid, can't leave without ya, ya know?"

The figure turned toward me, and took a few short-strided steps forward. I could only see his face when he was less than two feet in front of me the mist was so thick. I'm shivering, damn it's freezing!

The kid looked about five years old, maybe less. His face was hidden beneath an overtly long fringe of brandeis blue hair, he's dressed in the plain white shirt and pants that you'd see on every test subject here. The skin that's visible is a pasty shade of white, with the barest hint of tan. The kid lifted his head to stare at me, and my blue eyes made contact with eyes of the same color. Wait, I know that face...

"Kid?" I'll admit I like the new look, but he looked better with his natural ebony hair and eyes. What had the Crytex bastards done to

him now? I made a mental swear to go and personally see to those jerks' slow and painful demises.

"Whooo...?" His voice had a new wraith-like quality that gave off a creepy ambience.

"Come on," I started, "you remember it's me, it's Morphine."

"Mor... phhhhi... ne...?"

"Yeah, I'm here ta get you outta here kid." I held out my hand toward him, he flinched and took a step back.

"Not... leave..." His ice blue eyes dropped to study the floor in an absent-minded manner.

'Wait, what?' I thought in surprise, then I voiced my thoughts. "Wait, what? Don't ya wanna get out of this hellhole?"

"Yessss..." He grabbed my hand and tugged me toward the Physical Enhancement sector. As we passed doors, I could see that the virus program I had unleashed throughout the entire facility had opened all the doors. 00578 didn't have a name, I have to remember that, he needs a name, but nothing suits him. Every time I thought of a name they just didn't suit him, not his ever bright (however downplayed) attitude despite being stuck in this hell, or his capacity to forgive. Damn, there I go thinking deep again, it's days like this when I'm glad that Crytex still thinks I'm a mindless, well-"trained", emotionless drone.

"So why shouldn't we book it?" I asked, he stared at me oddly. Oh yeah I forgot he's lived here for most of his young life, "why shouldn't we leave now?"

"Therrrrre be..." He began but then we had to duck into an open cell as a bunch of security guards and scientists came down the hall. When they passed we left our hiding place and are continuing down the hall. Towards the experimentation rooms, everything was going well so far...

Then why do I have the feeling that a ton of crap is about to happen?

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

With Cloak-Guy and Harry...

Harry's POV....

We kept going through the trees and all the tree jumping made Valerius complain about being sick to his stomach. I rolled my eyes, though I really can't quite disagree with that statement.

"Are we there yet?" I asked, again.

"No, almost." Cloak-Guy said then I saw a building up ahead, dang it was huge! With wire fences that crackled with sparks, was it magic?

"That's-" Then Cloak-Guy interrupted me.

"Where your sister is." He finished. We were outside the building, why don't we just go in? I'm worried about my sister, no telling what kind of trouble she's in...

"Well," I whispered, "why don't we go in there and rescue her?" I walked forward only to be stopped by Cloak-Guy's hand on my shoulder. I looked up at him.

"Kid, that's a heavily guarded high-tech facility with armed guards, workers, and other things I don't wanna mention. You're not going in there." Cloak-Guy said with a slightly harsh tone.

"What? But-" I started to argue then he clamped a hand over my mouth as a weird armor, person, thing walked by. When it was gone, Cloak-Guy let me open my mouth.

"Look before ya say anything," He pointed at me, "a snake and a slight ability to make things float is not gonna cut it. They've got more weapons than I have mood swings, they'll kill you. Which is why I'm going in there. You will wait here." His tone held a note of finality.

"No, besides why should I trust you?" I spat back. "She's mah sis'er and ya jus' expect me to wait here like a 'good' little kid and wait for ya? No way jose!"

"Gah!" Cloak-Guy fumbled with the edges of his black cloak, "look I don't think your sister would appreciate you being dead. You. Stay. HERE." He pointed to the spot I was standing on. "Don't move I'll be back."

"Wait!" I called after him, Cloak-Guy turned his hooded face, which I still can't see by the way. "Why, why're ya helping us?" Then he smirked.

"Call it a favor I owe." Then he turned and his cloak billowed out, and jumped clear over the fence. That was about ten feet high, I think my jaw dropped, anime style. But once I picked up my jaw from the floor...

'Like hell I'm gonna wait here for some stranger to rescue my sister.' And with that I looked for a way in, but there was nothing but a ten foot high fence separating me from my sister. But how's a little kid like me supposed to climb that?

/I might have an idea./ Valerius hissed sneakily. I nodded, a smile appearing on my face.

"Don' worry Retta." I muttered, "We're comin' for ya."

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

With Harrietta... (Spans from 1 hour before Morphine's interference all the way to 30 minutes before where I left off up there)

Harrietta's POV...

Shots. I hate needles. They stink, I don't care how tiny they are. Like what the heck?

Then the tall people in white robes, coats, whatever, dumped me into a tank of water when I realized something.

'I can't swim.' I immediately panicked. I had to fight to keep my head above water, but I could feel myself grow tired. I can't keep this up, I also realized how fast you can learn to swim when you're about to drown. But it's been almost an hour and my arms and legs feel like I've got rocks tied to them, very heavy rocks. Then my head went under, I held my breath. I heard people talking around me...

"Well, the subject exhibits tenacity if nothing else." Said one guy.

"Hm," Another voice paused, "are you sure you gave the subject the right serum?"

"Of course I am, I'm not stupid." The first guy replied haughtily.

"Well, if all goes well we can get a few good experiments out of this subject before it kicks it." At those words I felt my blood boil, those jerks! IT? I'm an it? Before I kick it? I'm just an unfortunate victim to this sick experiment?

As my air ran out I was forced to open my mouth and my limbs gave out, I'm too tired. Water started filling my lungs, so this is what drowning feels like...

But it's not like I want to die. I don't wanna die dangit! My lungs feel like they're burning and everything's hazy. If it weren't for the water, I think I was crying, yeah me, crying. What about Harry? How'd he take it? Would he be all alone? Then I found myself thinking of my new, if not nameless, friend. I wondered if that's what a friend was like, I wouldn't know, the closest thing I have to a friend is Harry. I really don't think brothers are supposed to count though...

My back hurts and my arms, is that what the serum thingie they're talking about is doing? I'm seeing everything in a purple tint. I'm desperate for air now; then, like all the other times I tried practicing magic, I reached, called, and screamed for my magic, but it didn't seem to answer. Like what the heck? Isn't magic supposed to have some sort of self-preservation instinct or something?

Everything feels like it's burning, why the hell aren't I passed out yet? I can't breathe, I'm dying for Merlin sake! I don't want to die here!

'I don't want to die here... I don't want ta...' Then I saw flashes of purple, and red. I heard glass shattering and an exploding sound. I see more red, then blue? What's with the light show? I think I'm hallucinating from lack of air. My knees hurt, then I felt another surge of magic run through me, it's mine, there's so much, it burns, hurts me...

'Damn my grammar's goin' from lack o' air.'

"RAOWWRRR!" Holy crud monkeys what the hell was that? Then lights flashed and stuff mini-exploded and I passed out into sweet oblivion...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

With Morphine and 00578...

Morphine's POV...

The kid had already dragged me halfway across the facility, while dodging and hiding from security guards, scientists and my fellow Techs. I could tell the kid sped up, though I couldn't get over his new look, and then he looked up at me.

"Look kid," I started, "we've already been through at least thirty cells, all of 'em are either empty or they contain Rabids, I don't think whoever your lookin' for is he-"

BOOM!

I was interrupted by the sound of an explosion, then the kid let go of my hand and ran into the pitch darkness toward the noise...

"Kid!" I whispered in an annoyed tone, "wait up!" Then I ran after him...

00578's POV...

I feel a bit warmer, I was leading Morphine around looking for Ret. I haven't known Ret that long, but I've never meet anyone who could talk to me. Nobody at the facility talked the insane ones would just roar, and well you can't talk to a Lab-Coat...

I didn't want to leave Ret behind. I wanted to see the outside, and all those things that I'd heard her and Morphine talk about. I wanted to meet her brother she spoke about, I want Morphine to meet Ret.

Then there was another explosion and huge bellowing roar. I dashed for the experimentation room down the hall, the whole experimentation room was a mess, wires were hanging everywhere

along with torn metal, torn metal, and random part of machinery that littered the ground. Then I saw something, or someone lying on the floor, with a mass of black hair and, spikes?

The person lying, passed out on the floor is short, about my height, with lots of fluffy black hair. Through the hair, and through rips in the back of the shirt was a row of sharp thin, five-inch spikes that rose up like blades (literally) from the unconscious person's back. Each spike was slanted at the top and ended in a sharp blade tip with a single, thin stripe of purple near the tops of them.

"Mmggrr..." Then I heard a familiar, if not slightly scratchy and more guttural or growly than before. "Wha-?"

"Ret!" I immediately hugged her, and she stiffened.

"Holy-!" I actually know what her face looks like now, she has pale skin and grey eyes. She scrambled to her feet and stared at me, they'd already experimented on her. But she'd kept her mind and everything and hasn't gone insane yet, that's cool.

"Hiya!" I chirped with a smile.

"You? The nameless kid? What're you, wait a min'te." She looked at herself, and her eyes went wide.

"Look I know this must be a big revelation , but-" Morphine's monotone voice was only interrupted.

"What the (censored) (censored)?" Ret exclaimed. Then I noticed that her hands had claws, not like sharp fingernails, I mean wicked-sharp, curved, grey claws that took up almost half of each finger. Her canine teeth stuck out a bit too. I think she looked cool, then there was the tail, about three and a half foot long, slender with a huge amount of short fluffy black fur covering it. The tail almost constantly twisted and curved like a whip of something. When she stands, I can see the black fur that covers her now bent-back legs along with paws at the ends. She looked rather, beastly, pretty dang cool if ya ask me though!

"Well, the Lab-Coats musta done somethin' to ya. Like mutated ya or something." I explained.

"But your reaction leaves a lot to be desired..." Commented Morphine.

"I have fur, a tail, teeth and claws... Did I mention teeth? How should I be reacting? Should I go on a stereotypical rampage or something?" Ret snapped angrily.

"Well, there's a side-effect right now," Morphine muttered in her usual "Tech" monotone, "you have some misplaced aggression, and more inclination towards physical violence."

"Yeah, but you're sane." I smiled, "That's a good thing too right?"

"Hmmp..." She muttered.

"Fine, this reunion is all well and good but can we escape, then have introductions? 'Cause as you may not know we have a tight schedule to keep..."Morphine interrupted impatiently while she looked over her shoulder nervously, though her face didn't show it. I saw Ret nod, and she tried to walk behind us, then fell flat on her face, mostly 'cause of the new shape her legs we in. I helped her up, Morphine peeked around the corner, trying to see if anyone was there. Ret had abandoned walking on two legs and tried all fours, which didn't work as well either 'cause her arms were shorter than her legs.

"Almost out ki-" Morphine turned the corner to have lights flash in our faces then I the clink noise that-

"Well, what do we have here?" The sight of the person made my back feel cold. And I think I could speak for Ret, Morphine and myself, when I thought.

'Oh shit.'

Harry's POV...

/Okay Valerius this is gonna work... I hope.../ I whispered towards Valerius. Valerius and I had already found the control box, but it was too high for me to reach so Valerius slithered up there. Then he began to was the box melting?

/No metal issssss a match for me!/ Valerius hissed triumphantly.

/What did you do?/ I wondered out loud.

/Oh yesssss, did I forget to mention that I'm a Ssssstromboli Flame Viper?/ Valerius snickered as I tilted my head in confusion.

/What's a Stromboli Flame Viper?/ I asked.

/Ssssstromboli Flame Vipers are a noble breed of magical snakes. We live on the Ssssstromboli volcano island, which is off the coast of the place called southern Italy. There issss a large volcano there which we spend most of our livessss. We have many ussssseful abilitiessssss, sssuch as generating certain amountssss of heat, also we have some of the deadliestsst venom to ever graccce thisss earth!/ Valerius boasted.

/Why didn't you tell me this earlier?/ I asked.

/You never assssked./ He answered as he finished melting the box then the wires and the fence opened, I face faulted.

/Well?/ I let Valerius slither into the safety of my sleeve, /what next?/

/Well, let's go looking for your egg-sister then./ Valerius instructed as he peeked out from the collar of my worn T-shirt. Then I heard loud banging noises, thanks to the fact the this was a hallway the noise echoed and hurt my ears. I found a broom closet and hid in it then some people came running past...

When they were gone, I tried to get out. But the door's locked, I'm trapped! Like in the cupboard back at the Dursleys! I hate the cupboard, it dark, and is it me or is it getting smaller in here? I can't save Retta while being locked in here! I suddenly felt so angry, at these people, Cloak-Guy(even if he was trying to help), and the fact that I got my self-stuck in a closet! I grabbed the doorknob and suddenly the door was ripped off its hinges and flew into the opposite wall. I looked at my hand and it had sparks of electricity, jumping from it. Valerius stared.

/Holy crap./ He hissed, and for once I couldn't really disagree...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Somewhere in an office building...

"Sir! Sir!" A man ran up to his boss's office. 'Boss man ain't gonna be happy about this...' He thought nervously.

"What?" The man at the desk snapped in annoyance as his work was interrupted.

"The Facility sir! There was a Defect!"

"Well? What are you incompetent fools doing about it?" He sneered, "it's just one Defect!"

"It was one of the Techs sir, the Tech knew our access codes and hacked the systems! The Tech also let loose every test subject in the vicinity. Many have already been recaptured, but some had to be killed when they resisted capture and well here's the list of the ones that were killed sir." He handed over a list.

"Killed?" The boss's voice was dangerously low, "do you realize that if the world found any of them all this company's progress would be reduced to nil, you incompetent fool? Millions of dollars down the drain, and then we'll have to deal with the government!" But then unexpectedly , he smiled. It sent shivers down the messenger's spine.

"Sir?"

"I want the subjects from these sectors," He outlined the different serial numbers, "to be caught alive."

"What about the rest?"

"Shoot them on sight."

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

00578's POV...

"Well what do we have here? A defective Tech and two escaped test subjects? How fortunate..." Said one of the men, there was

about ten or eleven of them. I recognize what they were all holding and pointing straight at us.

'Guns.' I thought with alarms going off in my head.

And seven of them were all pointed at Morphine...

A/N: Oooo, evil cliffies. Sorry, but I'm getting rather good at writing them. Okay People, here's the update! Whew, that's 11 microsoft word pages in 11 font sized letters. Plz there is an 8 REVIEW MINIMUM!

Request by me(besides for reviews):

-give me any idea(not crack!ideas) any idea, and I'll see about it. Also later on I have this contraverty that won't come until waaay in the future but can you all vote about the controversial role of Draco Malfoy? The choices are: evil!Draco, neutral!Draco, canon!Draco, or friend!Draco(plz give me the schematics about it okay? Thx.)

MUST READ!:

Okay a lot happened here, no I won't spoil you all, but I will say that the abilities were activated by accidental magic! Accidental magic happens when you're under stress or extreme emotion right? Well, I think that almost dying, drowning or having a case of claustrophobia or anger counts.

-Their abilities ARE NOT(I repeat: ARE NOT) "super-powers" like in those cheesy superhero comics(no offense _;) They will be explained later on, not they will not be mary-sue and immediately know how to control them. The only reason things like that happened like they did is their accidental magic saving their lives, okay? So don't nag me about turning them mary-sue!

-Valerius, I've finally told you people what breed of snake he is, mind you Stromboli Flame Vipers do not exist, I made them up. They are mine, my creation. So no-one can steal them!

-OOC-ness, I'm doing my best to keep the characters IC(in character) but I can only do so much. Besides Harry's personality is going to undergo some changes due to all the things he will

experience. I will not make too many drastic changes to personalities. So don't flame me about that.

-THIS IS AN AU PEOPLE! If you wanted canon then find some other fanfiction to read and don't bother flaming me.

-Morphine; yes our mystery character. I won't tell you much about her, but you'll be surprised. She's an awesome character in my opinion, though I'd like to think highly about all my characters that I create...

-00578, yes I know you all want him to have a name. I have a wonderful name for him all picked out, it'll come later.

-Cloak-Guy; look I can't give too much away about him either. It would spoil the story.

-All my OC's in general; they all have a part to play in this plot, they all make up many aspects of the story I have planned, now don't nag me about too many OC's they're not that hard to keep track of. If you are confused just ask me to put a guide in my next chapter or something.

-About my OC's; look I know everyone loves the main characters, I do too. But I have multiple main characters and they're all equally important. I like to give my characters substance and depth like every author does to their characters. If I start concentrating too much on one character please politely PM or review me about it, so I can fix it.

-NO FLAMES! I cannot repeat this enough, if you think this fic is terrible or you just DON'T like it, then stop reading it and don't waste your time FLAMING me. NOTE: All flames that are given will be used to roast marshmallows for myself, my cousin and our muses.

-CONSTRUCTIVE criticism is preferable, I want to improve my writing and I would greatly appreciate the feedback! Thank you.

-If YOU think that the story is moving TOO SLOWLY, then I would just like to say that this story is moving along just fine. I like the in between stuff, the things that make you feel all warm and fuzzy inside and the action along with it. Now, if you don't have the patience to read this then oh well! Read something else that rushes

everything to a pace that you like, fine by me, there are millions of other people out there.

-If Harry, Harrietta, and 00578 seem too mature for their age; well duh! Harry and Harrietta are smarter and more independent because of unintentional neglect. 00587 grew up for most of his life as a human lab-rat, he's been exposed to science and Morphine has helped him along in a sense, so what do you expect? I'm trying to make them as childish as I can while developing their characters along the way. They won't be too mature, but they will be advanced so lay off okay?

-Technology & time period: Would you all like me to make this happening in the 2000's? Or would you all rather have it stay in the original time period like in the books? 'Cause either way the technology in this story will be the same or more advanced like right now in the year 2009.

-Concerning Reviews; the rule hasn't changed people, 8 reviews MINIMUM to elicit an update if I have a chapter typed up.

-Why I will be updating a bit slow- my school computer's busted, I always type up most of my fanfictions there, I can't do it until the stupid people decide to fix the damn corrupted memory of that hunk of stone age junk. So I have to type at home, and technically I'm not allowed on the computer on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays so I'll be a little slow 'til they fix my school Pc. Though I'll still do my best to update as quickly as I can as long as I get good feedback!

Well, that's it, oh yeah one more thing...

REVIEW!
REVIEW!
REVIEW!
REVIEW!
REVIEW!

Chapter 14: Lab Chronicles: Daring Getaways & Twists of a Surprising Nature

Harrietta's POV...

'DANG!' We've got guns pointed at us, I have freaking claws and pointy teeth but I can't do a thing 'cause we'll all get shot by muggle guns! Can things get any worse?

"Well, I suppose we've found out about your little scheme, eh Tech-144?" I saw the brown haired lady's face twist into an angry snarl at the man's words.

"Rot in bloody hell, you (censored) son of a bitch!" She spat bitterly.

"Oh dear, I thought you were trained out of that. Well, there's always time to reprogram you..." It's dark but I can hear the nervous footsteps of a couple of them as they shift nervously. I don't like this...

"How about some collar and chair time?" A lady said sadistically, actually I think beyond the mass of new hair everything isn't as blurry anymore I can see better now. I watched the lady that the nameless kid called Morphine, go pale.

"You've been a bad Tech, stealing test subjects? Now that's pathetic." Sneered one of the men who had a gun pointed at myself, man this guy was pissing me off...

"Hey, boss." Piped up one of the stupider ones, "what serial number are these two." She indicated the nameless kid and myself with her gun.

"Both are first results, cage 'em and we'll dissect them later." He smirked and cocked the small, black handgun at her head. "But first, we have to deal with the Tech trash." The other "Techs" standing there didn't even look the least bit mad at the insult. How can they just stand there all quiet like that?

"Over my cold dead body you arse-faced bitch-tard." Morphine said in a total kick-ass monotone. She is so cool, though I still wish the guns were not present. Otherwise I bet I could've kicked their butts with my new form, thingie, whatever it was...

"Die traitor!" Screeched one of the gun-holder people. And she pulls the trigger...

Then wham outta nowhere she's plowed to the side out of harm's way, and then the whole hallway bursts into light...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

With Harry(back up to the beginning of THIS chapter)

Harry's POV...

/Well Valerius, any ideas where Retta could be?/ I asked as we sneaked through the halls, the people who ran past either didn't see me or were ignoring me. I'd like to think it was the first thing though...

/How sssshould I know? You humanssss obviousssssly musssst keep prissonerssss sssomeplacce.../ Valerius's voice trailed off.

/In other words you have no idea./

/That'ssss pretty much the gissst of it./ Valerius muttered sarcastically.

"Great..." I whispered to myself, this is both annoying and nerve-racking! Then as I went around the corner, I saw a very dim light. I could see like eleven people standing closest to me about three meters away, they all had guns and had them pointed at three figures.

Two of them were short, and one was tall and obviously an adult. It was too dim to see any colors or what their faces looked like. The people with guns hadn't seen me yet so I turned to leave...

You can't leave them there. My conscience nagged me.

'What can I do anyways?' I thought back angrily, 'I'm just a little kid, they've got guns and who knows what else! I won't stand a chance...'

/Nestling!/ Valerius said in a quiet, but urgent hiss, /Your sisssssster, ssshe'sss there! Up there!/

Retta? Last time I checked my sister has white hair, and she doesn't have a tail, or fur. But then I saw through the dim light, something made of blue, shiny crystal hanging around the furry beast-kid's neck, it's shaped like a butterfly...

'It's Retta!' I'm happy, it was Retta. Though she's looks really different, I've finally found her! I felt the sparkish feeling go down both my arms and watched the sparks jumps from my palms in random directions. Those people are pointing guns at my sister! How dare they? I can't really think of anything better so I held out my palm and grasped for the surge of magic and-

FLASH!

Then the walls ripped and wires exposed as a huge bolt of bright blast of white lightning tore down the hall. My eyes widened and the people down the hall had rolled to the side to avoid the blast, okay not what I was really going for but that works too...

Then the woman who had guns pointed at her earlier, curled her fist and smashed it right into a tall guy's jaw with a sharp crash as the guy fell into the wall. Go mystery lady! I ran towards my now dark haired and fluffy sister as the lady smashed the mean people into unconsciousness with the blunt side of the gun she'd grabbed.

"Come here ya big slice of southern fried wonderful!" I gave my sister a big hug, and I think I mighta given her a heart attack...

"Holy (censored) what (censored) are you doing here?" Yup, that's definitely Retta.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Morphine's POV...

Just when I thought our geoses were cooked I saw this flash of white light, and I leaped to one side as a huge blast of energy just ripped right through the hall and engulfed everything in one brilliant flash of white. Then as the light faded I took a chance and smashed my fist into the face of one of my would-be attackers. I saw another

kid, about the same height as 00578 and his new 'friend' hug the now furry creature.

"Hi!" 00578 chirped at the newcomer cheerily, some days I wonder if the shock therapy has actually fried his brain. Or maybe they did something to make him seem like he's on happy pills or just overtly joyful when he's not in pain, damn those Crytex bastards...

"Who're you?" Asked the green eyed kid, then I interrupted.

"Hey, I don't know if ya'll haven't noticed but there could be people coming to catch us at any time. I think we oughta book it while we still can, introductions can wait." I was already rifling through the Techs' and scientist's pockets, so far I've found two Smith & Wesson M&P semi-automatic pistols, to holsters and a few extra cartridges of ammo on one guy. A couple of wallets from the scientists, I'll grab those too, a high-powered flashlight, and, yes jackpot! There are two security cards, I turned them over.

'Snap.' These cards are only low access. These idiots must've been looking for a promotion when they came after us, it's a good thing though. If they didn't alert anyone of the higher ups, then my identity's safe, for now... But thanks to some planning, all computer files say I'm on a field duty, god I hope they buy that...

"So where to?" 'Ret' snuffed her voice had already gotten a couple tones deeper, it was more snarl-y. I could see the affects of yet another DNA altering serum. Though I haven't seen those kinds of effects go so quickly before, then again usually the subject died before they're physiology could be altered that much...

"Well, come on we have about five minutes before we have real problems." I stated as I strapped the two gun holsters to my belt, I'm holding a taser gun in my left hand. I'm ambidextrous, but I like using my left hand more often than not...

"So wha's the pl'n?" 00578 chirped as we snuck down the dark hallways, this facility is a bloody maze!

"Look," I whispered harshly, "ya'll have to stay quiet, just stick behind me and don't make a peep or our geese are cooked." I peeked around the corner, my nervousness rising. But thanks to training, torture if you ask me, I've already learned to smother all my

emotions into nothingness, or at least hide them for my own safety's sake...

"Get these bodies out of here! The noise came from this direction, spread out and capture anything that's alive!" Came a commanding voice from around the corner, crap I knew that voice. It was Richardson, one of the high ranking scientists of the facility. Damn, we're so screwed if he sees us...

I felt a slight tingle as something like the energy I'd used to short out the entire facility with it wasn't a surge like mine, it was like a thin veil. The footsteps were in front of us now, but I know it was dark but how come they couldn't see us? They were right in front of us for all sakes!

Soon after the Crytex workers footsteps had faded from my hearing range. I let out a breath I didn't know I'd been holding. Too many close calls in one day, they're making me more jumpy than I usually am...

"How come they didn't see us?" 00578 wondered out loud.

"I wanna rip their (censored) throats out... Damn (censored) jerks they can experiment on me do they? Well th'se ignoramus's got another thin' coming... " I find Ret's snarlsh, angry mutterings to be both appealing and slightly disturbing considering she is around, like five years old. That must be the new instincts kicking in, I hope she doesn't end up turning into a mindless beast like the rest of 'em...

"Come on, stick close." We turned another corner, oh whoopee, more hallway. I don't know the layout of this sector, and I can barely see. Damn, it's also blacker than pitch in here, I may have a tazer but I wouldn't know if someone was there unless they stood right in front of me. I'd probably be dead by that point though, crap...

"Hold up." Harry says, "where's that guy who saved ya?" Oh man so someone did push me out of the line of fire. What happened to that person though? Now that I think about it, through the empty hallway, I could hear five sets of footsteps. Mine, the kids and someone following us.

"Well, damn kid. What the hell? I tell ya's ta stay put. But do ya listen? Noooooo." I spun around and brandished the tazer in the voice's general direction. "Well shit, talk about high strung..."

"Who are you?" Surprisingly it was Ret who said that. I could hear her snarling at him.

"Well, I did come all the way here to save ya. I woulda done in half the time if your bro just stayed put when told!" The mystery guy said.

"Fine. Whatever, can we just get outta here?" Snapped Ret.

"I don't trust you." I cocked the tazer at the barest silhouette of the guy, the silhouette nodded.

"I think he's okay." Chirped 00578 in his oblivious cheeriness, gah that's really getting on my nerves. But, if he thinks this guy's alright, well, I suppose I'll trust his judgment, for now...

"Don't have ta." Then the silhouette, did a jig?

"Fine then come on let's get outta this hellhole. You too, weirdo." I turned around and walked on, they followed...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Harrietta's POV...

It was Cloak-Guy, that dancing idiot sent us to this damn town. I personally blame him...

My body didn't hurt so much as it did before, I think the claws are actually kinda cool now that I think about it. But even though it was dark before, and I mean dark! Everything was getting clearer, I could see more and things weren't as blurry as usual when I didn't have my glasses. What the heck's going on?

My voice was a bit different, I snarled more often without meaning to. How long has it been, like less than an hour? I could smell stuff, from far away and hear things better. I'm glad Harry's back though, it feels weird when my brother's not here...

Harry had given a short explanation of Cloak-Guy trying to help. Though the dancing was getting annoying...

"Will ya stop the (censored) dancin' already? It's gettin' on mah (censored) damn ner'es!" I spat out, for some reason I felt so much angrier at the little things.

"Geez, you're a little ray of sunshine ain't ya?" I still see things in blurry, but that really P.O.-ed me.

"Yer this close to bein' mah first scratchin' post ta test these claws 'o mine, real close..." I growled.

"Okay, geez..." I saw him move to the other side of Harry, coward doesn't wanna face me? Hah, of course who would?

"Shut up all of you." Morphine snapped at us, she didn't really look at us, she just looked at our general direction. I don't get it it's not that dark in here...

Unless something weird is happening to my eyes, just great! As if it wasn't enough that I got claws, teeth, fur and a tail, now my eyes are in a funk! GRAH!

"Well here we are." And with that Morphine opened a door and we all stepped through...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Cloak-Guy's POV...

'Ooooo, shiny.' I'm distracted again, gotta focus, gotta focus, gotta fo-

"OMG a giant cupcake!" I pointed at the truck with a cupcake-like symbol. Harrietta bared her now sharper canines at me in obvious annoyance.

"Hey, they're not supposed to be here!" A Crytex Tech shouted from below and pointed at us, I heard the cocking of guns and Hunterz being called to attention, Hunterz usually vary in many ways. Such as their genetic make-up and their abilities, they're made in series, with serial numbers. But I'm getting off topic, again...

"Damn I knew you were trouble!" Morphine swore at me, then she muttered so many profanities that would make any sailor out there blush.

"Get 'em!" They let out the Hunterz. While this was happening I decided to unshrink his and Retta's backpacks and gave them to him... Ooooo, a giant fluffy bunny!

"Shit." Everyone but 00578 cursed, and I smiled.

"I quite agree." That earned me a smack upside the head, as the huge mutated monsters charged at us, I put my hands in my pockets and felt for my knives, a fight. Yeah this is gonna be good, I took out my two steak knife-sized scalpels and grinned. This is gonna be fun, but then I thought of something as I got a good glimpse of the Hunterz...

'PUPPIES!' They look like huge rabid, killer, crocodile-puppy-cheetah-coyote-lizard things with teeth the size of steak knives! 'CUTE!'

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Morphine's POV...

'Damn that guy's stupidity is going to kill us!' I'm angry damnit! That idiot got us spotted now we have Hunterz coming right for us with other Techs, armed Techs. They had standard, but low-grade, guns and standard tazers that the police would use. Suddenly the black cloaked guy pulls out two huge scalpels and smiles. That's about the only part of his face that I can see right now, he's about my height maybe an inch or two shorter.

He still grinned as the Hunterz charged at us, it isn't that bright, but at least it's brighter than the rest of the facility, so I drew one of my recently acquired pistols, aimed and pulled the trigger.

BANG!

I saw the kids jump at that, yeah gunshots are much louder in real life than they are on TV, not to mention when you're standing less than five feet away from the gun.

Then more gunshots rang out, they were aiming for me and the guy in a cloak. He began jumping and leaping around like a monkey whilst stabbing his over-sized scalpels into Hunterz' heads'. I can't help but be at least (only slightly) amazed at the havoc he's wreaking.

I hit another Tech with the tazer and shot another one of the Hunterz. I switched between knocking all the Techs out and shooting at the Hunterz, I actually wasn't trying to kill them, just incapacitate them. But a lot of times when dealing with Hunterz, that's not really an option. I saw Ret, 00578 and Harry standing and dodging off to the side. Wait a minute what the hell was that girl doing?

She just charged the Hunterz and, crap I can't watch-

SMASH! SLAM! BASH! WHAM!

I looked back to see, a pair of unconscious Hunterz?

"Not bad for a kid eh?" Ret declared with a sharp-toothed smirk. I noticed that any incoming Hunterz were soon dispatched by the cloaked person. His way of dealing with them left a gory mess that even made me slightly queasy...

I rushed down the stairs down to the hangar/garage type room, well it was a huge room... I turned back to see the kids right behind me, well, Harry had dragged Ret away from the fight. But Cloak-Guy is still fighting (and brutalizing) more Crytex workers. Um, was that someones liver that just went flying by my face?

"Hey!" I called out, "come on we gotta go!" Cloak-Guy turned, and smiled, it was serene but creepy...

"Nah!" He stabbed his scalpels forward and swung them like in some sort of dance. "I'm gonna stick around for some fun!" Then he continued to gore another-

"Fine not my fault if you've got a death wish..." I looked at 00578, Harry and Ret. I motioned them to follow me, I picked the nearest vehicle, a delivery truck. I'd stolen a key from one of the pockets of the workers I'd knocked out. I stuck it into the ignition, the damn thing wouldn't start. NO!

"What the hold up?" Asked Harry, the kid had the same kind of effect that 00578 had. Unbearably cute, it made you just want to cuddle 'em like fluffy teddy bears, absolutely annoyingly adorable.

Phit! Phit! Phit!

Those were the tranquilizer darts sinking into the side of the truck, I gave the key another twist and the engine roared to life. I slammed the gas pedal down and the truck lurched forward, and oh damn, the main hatch doors were closing!

"Damn!" I shouted, the doors were closing too fast, we'd never make it, that or get squashed between them. I can't believe it! After all that planning and everything, we were going to get captured, killed and worse! I just feel so damn angry, I wanted to show 00578 the life a kid like him should have had. Like mine before crap happened and it went straight to hell...

Then a bullet whizzed through the glass, and my arm. So for once, not being bound by the regulations of being a 'loyal' Tech of Crytex, I did the 'normal person' thing, I let loose a scream.

Then multiple things happened at once. When I screamed I saw the kids cover their ears as my screech reached an unbearably inhuman high pitch. Then the auxiliary power that been running the machinery in the garage/hangar had shorted out. The doors had stopped and I floored it, what can I say? As outside-people say, don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Who am I not to take an opportunity?

We're out now, now just got to get through the heavily charged electric fencing and we're all home free.

'Why does that not sound very comforting?'

"Okay this is crazy!" Yelled Harry.

"Thanks for stating the obvious!" I gritted, it is much more difficult to drive a 105 foot truck with one hand than anyone would think, especially while being shot at, it's very distracting...

CLUNG! BANG!

Crap, are those bazookas?

The gate is up ahead getting closer. Sixteen yards, ten yards, four-

WHAM!

The truck smashed into the closed ten foot fence and it crumpled. Soon I kept driving through the empty road with no headlights. It was black as pitch still, it's surprising that this entire escapade occurred in only a mere two and a half hours. Harry, 00578 and Ret were silent, I think the adrenaline rush and all the excitement has really done a number on them. They're only five for book's sake! We had gone on a highway, at the speed limit, I don't have a license so I shouldn't give the cops a reason to pull me over...

We hit a gas station, I think my adrenaline rush has faded, because my arm hurts like all hell. Then I turned on a light, and attempted to bandage my arm. Then after what seemed like an eternity of silence, both Harry and Ret blinked in astonishment, what the-?

"Ms. Ralphes?"

A/N: Dun, dun, duuuuuuunnnn! Haha! I know more evil cliffies! They're just so darn addicting to write! They're fun! Sorry! Sorry I took so long writing this chap! I had to fix several plot mistakes that I made within this particular chapter, I had to edit BIG time! This has been spell & grammar checked by me and my computer several times. Please excuse the (in my opinion) poor description of action scenes, I'm not that good at writing them. Please give me constructive criticism if you have any, and if you don't, then review and tell me what you think! I'm really enjoying writing this fic and to all my faithful reviewers out there THANKS A MILLION! You all rock! I'll try and improve my action scene writing abilities okay? PLZ review! I know that there are only 7 reviews on the last chap but I'll update anyways cause I don't want to wait! CLICK DA BUTTON! REVIEWWWWWW!

To Miss Count Duckula: Cloak-Guy is most definitely not Severus Snape, he's too random. Also I doubt Severus Snape likes to fight with giant scalpels... Mwahahahahhhahahhahah!

About Morphine: Yup, giant cliffie! 'Nuff said!

About Cloak-Guy: He has once again disappeared from the set! As far as we know, he has two giant scalpels and thinks random things, and like to dance on random occasions! He is also ruthless with his enemies and possibly insane. Just who is Cloak-Guy? Well I won't spoil you all, you'll just have to read and find out for yourselves! I'm so evil!

"Come here ya big slice of southern fried wonderful!" –Jackson from "Hannah Montana"

BACK TO ME: (in cheesy announcer/narrator voice) Where will they go now? Is the mysterious Morphine really the supposedly dead Ms. Ralphes? Will 00578 ever have a name? What mysterious pasts and plots are really involved? Find out in the next installment of the Maelstrom Twins!

NOTE: All flames shall be used to roast marshmallows for my cousin, myself and our muses.

Chapter 15: Lab Chronicles: Explanations, Names, & Sunrises

Harrietta's POV...

"Ms. Ralphes?" Harry and I just had to yell, I mean, we saw her get sent flying by a truck for crying out loud! We thought she was dead! Now she just up and shows up alive, and saves us from a real creep-the-heck-out-of-you place. Too much has happened within the span of what, less than three days? My brain's finally gone into overload, I simply don't feel like sorting this mess out within my own mind... Oh man my teeth and face hurt, a lot... Grah... I feel like smashing something... Or biting something...

"It's Morphine." Chirped the blue haired captain cheerful.

'Okay,' my eye twitched, 'he's too darn happy... Must... Not... Bite...'

"But you're Ms. Ralphes from the school library." Harry whispered almost over the shock.

"I am, but I'm not." She gritted as she tore strips of cloth from the bottom of her lab coat and used them to bandage her upper arm. Oh man, who knew that an arm could bleed so much? Yet strangely, I remain undisturbed by the red liquid... Wow, that last thought was strangely poetic...

"Whaddya mean by that?" Man the pain in my mouth is garbling up my language. Man why does my face itch so badly?

"Well Ralphes was part of my original name, I was on field duty." Morphine answered.

"Okay, that's it," Harry exclaimed suddenly, "I want an explanation, I want answers. Who were those guys? What do they want? Why did they have Retta, what did they do to Retta, how did you survive, and most importantly why were you even there?"

Morphine sighed, "Those guys, were Techs. They're the main labor force for a company called Crytex. Crytex is a multi-purpose scientific research company, or so the world thinks." She paused as she knotted the cloth secure around her arm. She had removed the

lab coat and was wearing and tossed it carelessly across the back of the seat. "Hah."

"Hah?" I said, "what's 'hah' supposed to mean?"

"I just can't believe it. We're out. We made it." Morphine muttered to herself disbelievingly.

"So Ms. Ralpes how'd ya, you know, live after the truck hit?" Harry asked.

"First of all that's not my name, second," She paused, "I'd rather not talk about it, it was a rather painful experience that I'd much like to put behind me."

"Does no-one find this odd?" The blue haired kid's hair was starting to turn into a dark shade black. I let my eyes narrow, why don't I need glasses anymore? Are my eyes fixed? Man if so, that's cool!

"What?" Morphine said, her expression blank, her icy blue eyes showing slight confusion.

"Well, were just sitting here. We just busted out of a high security facility, with guys shooting at us. In a delivery truck. Yet here we are, jus' sitting here havin' a good conversation, and how long have we been driving? All variables point to something's going ta happen, soon." I think he's spent too much time in that box...

"Crap you're right! We gotta get moving!" Morphine was about to start the truck, then I reached out with my clawed paw, hand, oh whatever, and grabbed her wrist with strength that a five year old definitely shouldn't have.

"No, I don' wanna go an'wher' 'till I get some answers. Explain, everything." She gave a blank look, then sighed.

"Fine, Crytex is a research facility, it's just not very humane. Your recent changes can attest to that."

"What's attest mean?" Asked Harry.

"I mean that well, Harrietta remember those mutants you trashed back there?" Morphine had a slight 'why me' look on her face.

"It's Retta." I corrected.

"I thought you were Ret?" the not so blue-haired kid said cluelessly.

"It's really Harrietta, bu' I don' like bein' called the whole thing, so I'm called Retta." Then Morphine answered my question.

"Well you're like a newer version of them." Morphine put in as she turned the key and we pulled out of the parking lot.

"Newer version? What are they in the first place?" Why do I have the sudden urge to scratch my ear with my back paw?

"Well I can't really tell what serial number you were out in so I don't know what serum they used." Morphine started to ramble, then she switched lanes, "Oh, those were what I call Hunterz, their the guard 'dogs' of the place. Their also some of the best trackers you'll ever have the misfortune to meet, they're sent out when brute force is needed and technology fails. Basically they're mutant slaves to whatever they're trained to do and follow. They are attempting to make them from scratch, but unfortunately they always end up being too physically unstable so they die within a few days after solidifying."

"So I'm one of those?" I remarked.

"Not really, I've never seen that Frame-version before. Obviously they used an untested mixture on you." Morphine switched lanes again.

"Untested?" Harry said.

"As in, you had more than a ninety-five percent chance of the changes overwhelming your body and dying." Morphine said tonelessly.

"And the other five percent?" Harry yawned, good lord I'm tired too...

"Two percent says you mutate and adapt fine but go wild and totally lose your mind, two point five percent says your body mutates to such an uncontrollable degree that the pain causes you go insane and find some way to commit suicide." Morphine's explanation left

everyone blue hair, Harry and myself all quiet. Dude I could've ended up like that?

"What about-" Then she interrupted me.

"But you're the point five percent that is an unknown factor. You're completely sane and your mutation is coming along well, how much does it hurt?" I stared at her with my newly improved eyes.

"Not much." Then I felt my face push outwards. Okay I'll admit, it felt weird but it didn't hurt too much as anyone would think it would. A few seconds later I had something like a dog muzzle, and more teeth...

"Seri'sly cool. Ya look I'ke Padfoot." Harry commented.

"Am I the only one who sees how weird th's is?" I growled.

"Can I h've a m'rr'r?" The teeth make it hard to pronounce my words, it's getting annoying.

Morphine pointed to the rear-view mirror. Dude I have fur!

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

Retta's back. I'm totally pooped. From running from crazy dudes to explanations and all this crud happening. I think my brain's just fried, over-cooked, burnt. I'm overjoyed that we escaped that creepy building. I can still remember those high walls, about two to four stories high, different sections, small windows scattered at different spots. The building had no real color, is was a mix of bland shades of brown, beige and tan. The inside wasn't much better, though I couldn't really tell what color it was on account that it was dark.

The winding hallways were enough of a nightmare, and I wasn't even there for that long. Less than three hours maybe?

"Retta how'd ya end up there anyways?"

Retta looks sorta like a human-dog cross, with more dog. Her frame is basically the same, she just has black fur, it's slightly thicker on

her arms with bear-like claws that took up a little less than half each finger. (I know this 'cause I once read an animal book at the library before the Dursley's dumped us) Retta had a winding black tail, it had gotten longer and her fur had gone from shaggy to short in a matter of minutes as Ms. Ralphes kept driving. Retta's legs bent back and ended in black paws with sharp claws sticking out slightly. Retta's muzzle is sorta short, but it hid her sharp and pointy teeth. Her ears were like a dogs', they flopped down slightly when she's relaxed. She has a mane of black hair instead of white, and short, flat spikes that rose from her spine. Retta looks completely different now, but I think on top of the magic I did and everything that's happened, I say it's pretty wicked.

The blue-haired kid, isn't so blue-haired anymore either. His hair turned black and so did his eyes, he wore a plain white T-shirt and white shorts. I haven't known him for more than two hours and I already know that he's a very cheerful person.

Ms. Ralphes, I really don't know what to think about her anymore. I mean she was one of the only nice adults my sister and I knew at school. But then she was hit by a small truck and I thought she died. Then it turns out that she's not dead and everything's just gotten so crazy in a matter of three days.

'When did life get so complicated?' I thought while absently rubbing my forehead.

"Come on, Ms. Ralphes how'd you survive getting hit by that truck?" I asked excitedly.

She sighed, "Look, all I know is I was hit by the truck, I blacked out, then I woke up with a few cracked ribs and a heck of a lot of bruises. Not the best experience of my life, but better than what I was expecting." She paused, then added, "and it's not Ms. Ralphes."

"Why?" the nameless kid said. "You're Morphine too right?"

"No, not really. I never gave myself that name. Morphine," She scoffed, "yeah right, look at the wonderful job I did back at the facility. I sure am wonderful."

"You're cool." I scratched one of Retta's dog ears, she leaned in then jerked away and acted slightly insulted.

"Don' do that man." Retta growled out, "I am not a dog."

"Of course not," the nameless kid piped in with a more serious tone, "you're pr'b'ly the untested, not mass-pr'duced, new Hunterz breed. They were pr'b'ly gonna dissect ya and stuff if ya stayed th're."

"Why'd ya say your name was Ms. Ralphes if it wasn't th'n?" Retta asked.

"Cause it was Crytex field duty."

"What's that?" Retta and I asked.

"Field duty is when workers go out to the outside world to scout, infiltrate and scout for more test subjects." Her face looked a bit guiltily.

"So wait," Retta blurted, "were you one of those creeps who kidnapped me?"

"No, I may scout for new test subjects, but I don't bring any in. I deem everyone I find 'unfit' and they buy it. I haven't brought in one new test subject for a long time." Ms. Ralphes sounded a bit, proud.

I looked at my sister, "Retta what happened to ya anyways?"

"I don't know," she rolled her eyes, I had just noticed that they were no longer grey, but a shade of crimson red. A bit creepy but it matched the whole dog mutant look very well. "I woke up then went looking for some breakfast and scouting the street. Then some rag was shoved in my face and I blacked out. Then I woke up in that creepy Crytex place and well the rest is history." Retta then shrugged. They had taken her jacket and dressed her the same way that the nameless kid was dressed.

"Ms. Ralphes-" I started.

"Look I'm not Morphine or Ms. Ralphes, okay?" She snapped, "those names were given to me but all they do is tie me to the past. I want nothing to do with them when they mean that."

"So can we call ya then?" The nameless kid asked as he stared out the window.

"Freedom." She answered.

"Why Freedom?" I asked quietly.

"Cause in this world, I've been given names that defined me by others. I'm picking my own." Ms. R-, I mean Freedom smiled faintly.

"Ya still hav'n't answered my question. Wha' does Cr'tex want with kids anyway?" I knew Ms. Ra-, Freedom, was avoiding the subject.

She sighed, "I don't really know, I wasn't high enough in any rank to know. Workers don't really have much privilege to know much of anything. Look, I'm not gonna lie to you, most of the work involved is maintenance, heavy-lifting, holding things, finding new test subjects and most of the dirty work in general." Freedom scowled, "agents scour streets for runaways and lost kids and use them for what they call 'research'. It's torture plain and simple. Crytex is a company run by a psychopathic (censored) son of a (censored), I hope that (censored) (censored) rots in bloody hell!" Freedom spat with more contempt and venom than I ever heard someone spit before.

"What's that?" The nameless kid pointed up ahead, I almost panicked but no-one was on the highway with us save a few cars.

"What're ya pointing at?" Retta muttered.

"That bright thing. Up in the sky." I felt my face go a bit blank.

"That's a sunrise." Freedom said quietly.

"It's pretty." He kept looking, and looking, then Freedom turned his head, literally she grabbed his chin and turned his head in another direction.

"Kid if you keep looking at the sun like that you'll go blind." The monotone was back.

"Shiloh." Retta said.

"Huh?" Freedom, the other kid and me said at the same time.

"You," she pointed a claw at the nameless kid, "look like a Shiloh to me."

"Hm." He put a hand under his chin and then he burst into a broad smile, "I like it."

"Good, 'cause I'm going to sleep." Retta muttered as she curled up on the back seat.

"So where are we going?" The newly dubbed Shiloh yipped excitedly.

"Yeah, where?" I wanna know too.

"Hm, what do you three think, Italy maybe?" Freedom let a smirk show.

"That's where Valerius is from!" I thought out loud, then Valerius hissed in annoyance at being jostled from his nap.

"Valerius?" Shiloh asked.

"My snake. He's a Stromboli Flame Viper." I let Shiloh and Freedom see Valerius wrapped around my arm.

"What's a Stromboli Flame Viper?" Freedom asked in her old monotone.

/I can set myself on fire, burn and melt things, I have deadly Fire-Venom, I can generate heat and I can swim in lava./ Valerius boasted.

"He can swim in lava , he's got ven'm, make heat, an' swim in hot lava." I relayed.

"I don't know if anything could swim in lava, but after all the crazy things I've seen in my life I'll believe anything at this point." Freedom rolled her eyes.

"To Mount Stromboli then!" Shiloh chirped, "what's Mount Stromboli?"

"A volcano." I answered.

"Ooohhh..." Shiloh's face was blank. "What's a volcano?"

"This is gonna be a long day." Freedom said to the truck roof.

"I couldn't agree more!" Shiloh and I laughed, Retta mumbled in her sleep.

"Look, before we go anywhere, we stock up, get rid of those scraps you call clothes, and get something to eat." As if on cue, all three of our stomachs growled, even though Retta was fast asleep. Freedom snickered as she took a turn at an exit.

"Hey, Ms.-, I mean Freedom," I started.

"What is it Young Lightning?"

"How's ya end up working f'r such goons anyways?" I finished. I could see her face in the rearview mirror, she looked a bit sad.

"That's a story for another day," She said a very quiet voice, then she smiled sadly and messed up my hair affectionately, "now get some sleep brats, you'll need it."

"That's what I'd say." Complained Retta.

"I thought you were asleep." Shiloh commented.

"Not with you two going, blah, blah blah, blah blah." Retta moved her clawed hand in a mouth-like motion rather comically.

"Oh be quiet." I giggled. Shiloh flat out laughed.

"Go to sleep or I find some sleeping gas." Freedom said tiredly.

"Okay." Shiloh yawned, causing me to yawn, then Retta did.

"You're b'th c'ntag'ous." Retta had curled up again.

'What a day...' I thought as I curled up next to my sister, and Shiloh, Retta and I fell asleep in the back seat as Freedom drove on...

A/N: Hiya! I got a hundred reviews! I'm so HAPPY! I hit the 100 review mark! WOOOOT! YATTA! I'm sorry if the writing's a bit awkward. I'm tweaking it, and yeah, I've been feeling rushed cause people keep telling me to hurry. I'm going to slow the story down again, cause if I hurry I'll end up dishing out crappy chapters. I hate crappy chapters, cause everything I write is a reflection of my skill, imagination and myself. So beyond this point I will not longer answer anything related to speeding up the plot. Enjoy the reality and depth I am attempting to give these characters. I know that the whole good vs. evil battle is exciting, but I like the normal things that happen in life. I won't spoil you all too much but, I will do a Christmas chapter at some point soon, I like a dose of reality in my stories. This is my first shot at that, please enjoy the story. I know I haven't hit 8 reviews from the last update but since I got 100 reviews I'll update. PLZ REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW!

NOTES:

Morphine/Freedom (Recap)- It has been confirmed, she is and was formerly known as Ms. Ralphes, the librarian at the school that Harry and Retta went to for a couple of months or so. She was then fired for attempting to help Harry and Retta because of the Dursleys alienating the principal against both Harry and Retta. She was then hit by a truck which she miraculously survived(this will be explained later). You all later find out that she is known as Tech-144 who works at a place that is owned and run by a company called Crytex. She is given the name Morphine(This will be explained in more detail at a later point in time). Then currently she has just renamed herself Freedom, a symbol that she says that she's choosing her own path in life. Well I won't say anymore, but what do you guys think of her? FROM THIS POINT ONWARD SHE WILL BE REFERED TO AS FREEDOM

Valerius- Yeah, I mentioned his powers.

Shiloh- Formerly known as, nameless kid, 00578, and the blue-haired kid. If anyone has not noticed his hair and eyes have gone back to their normal color which is black. He is now to be referred to as Shiloh, his past (spoiler blocker). Sorry I can't spoil ya'll, but I will let you all know that he is one of the major main characters in this plot. Every character is crucial in some way, he is too. His personality is cheerful and clueless, he doesn't know what the sunrise looks like because he's been locked up in that Crytex facility

since he was two. There's even a flashback that confirms it somewhere in one of my previous chapters. So he is five, he may have an understanding of science which he was exposed to, but when it comes to 'normal' things, he's in the dark, he's got catching up to do. Tell me what ya'll think of him plz!

Harrietta- Yeah, not really beast!Retta, but kinda like that. All I will say is that she won't be stuck like that, I want it to be sorta like a morph-type thing. I almost wrote this with Beast!Harry, but I've read so many Beast!Harry fics that I tried doing my own thing so it became Beast!Retta. I think it's original, I'm not over-powering Retta, I'm just giving her own thing to do.

Cloak-Guy- Let me just say, I cannot spoil you all. Sorry I just can't, I know I'm evil. But he's a crucial part of this plot too. You just won't know until I write that part, and that won't be for a while.

REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW!

Chapter 16: Chase Chronicles: Food, Bonding & a Familiar Face

Freedom's POV...

Well, my life is officially nuts. I used to work for a psycho company called Crytex, emphasis on the 'used to' bit. Crytex is a scientific company that puts up a front to the world that they're doing research to benefit mankind, as I drove I gave a snort. 'Yeah right!'

The kids were asleep. Back up a few years, I would have never even thought about betraying Crytex, yet here I am harboring two escaped experiments and a kid with a fire-snake. Can my life be any more complicated? I wish it wasn't. It's almost unbelievable to me, after sixteen years of coming and going to different Crytex facilities, I have a choice, and I'm never going back, ever. For once my heart feels light, I don't have to pretend not to feel, or act like a "normal" Tech. I remembered my old name, when I told those kids to call me Freedom, I didn't want my old name. I don't want to be called Morphine, it reminds me too much of the facility. I want my own life, thank you.

"Are we there yet?" My thoughts were interrupted by the newly dubbed Shiloh, I realized that the kids had been sleeping for about an hour or so.

"No." I answered tonelessly, unintentionally falling back on my Tech habits.

But Shiloh who is used to my cold tone, was happier than I've ever seen him, "Are we gonna eat someplace?"

"Wake up the-" I started, I heard two sleepy yawns.

"We're up, we're up..." Harry mumbled as he rubbed his still-tired eyes.

"Wha- Oh damn, I thought it was all s'me crazy dream..." Muttered Retta.

I made a funny, dry hacking sound, they all stared at me oddly. Funny, I think I'm trying to laugh, I guess it still needs work. "Yeeeeeaah, sorry to burst your bubble, but this is as real as it gets kid." I let a slight smirk crawl onto my face.

"Oh darn." The newly mutated Retta muttered sarcastically. I think her mutation had stopped about half an hour ago. Apart from the most obvious changes, she seemed to have a few last minutes additions those Crytex jerk-offs must've thrown in. Like the patch of dark, grayish-black scales that covered just half of the top-part of her black-furred muzzle and part of her forehead. Her teeth had sharpened considerably, yup they really were trying to emphasize the jaws alright...

"How you three holdin' up?" I asked.

"Just fine, Ms.- I mean, Freedom." Harry was still getting used to my name change I suppose.

"What's that?" Shiloh pointed to the side of the road.

"That's a tree, wait you don't know what a tree is?" Retta asked curiously.

"Nah, I've lived in the facility since I was about two." Shiloh answered matter-o-factly, then he pointed again. "What's that?"

"A bush." I answered his question this time.

"What's that for?" He pointed the fencing that rose up on top of the low, concrete fencing next to the sidewalk on the bridge.

"It's to prevent people from falling off the bridge and to prevent people from jumping off the bridge and committing suicide." I answered, these kids have already had a taste of reality, so why should I shield them from everything. I think that it's better that they understand the world around them, so that they can better live within it. Shiloh is a five year old who understands death, at least I think he does, and Harry and Retta, well...

"What was with that funky scream o' yours back there?" Asked Retta quietly.

"I haven't done stuff like that for a while now. I don't really know." I chewed my lip a bit.

"That reminds me of something... Wait, let me get that book out..." Harry began rifling through his small backpack, then he pulled out a book. It was leather –bound and kind of old. He flipped through the pages as Shiloh and Retta looked over his shoulder.

"Aha!" Harry stopped flipping through the pages. "Banshees."

"What, am I that scary?" Should I be insulted?

"No," Harry turned the book to me, "see it says right here, 'Banshees have a super-sonic scream that are deadly and can kill anyone. They are only vulnerable in the neck when they throw their heads back and close their eyes in preparation to screaming.'"

"I'll admit that I was pretty weird back there, but I highly doubt that I'm an imaginary-" Then Retta interrupted me.

"Actually they do exist," Retta's eyes were completely white, utterly devoid of the black pupil or the red retina. It looked like her eyes were open but then the white eyelid opened. "And so do dragons, unicorns, sirens, giants, goblins, leprechauns, and even fairies. The world just doesn't know about them, at least," Retta paused then gave a toothy smirk, "this one doesn't."

"I say Retta's right." Harry said.

"Me too!" Shiloh chirped.

"You have no idea of what we're talking about do you?" Retta said as she looked at Shiloh.

Shiloh looked thoughtful, and smiled as he said, "Not a clue." And we all face-faulted.

"Well if these banshees of yours are able to 'kill anyone' then why didn't you guys die? Or the Crytex workers?" I smirked; these kids can put up a pretty good debate, they just need a bit more refining...

"Well maybe you're just part banshee or something like that..." Harry trailed off as we passed another exit. Retta was hunkered down in the back seat trying not to be seen through the window, the last thing we need is a cop to pull us over and find a "monster" and arrest me for driving without a license.

"I highly doubt that." I turned down an exit, and Retta hunkered down even more. I don't think it's going to be possible for her to hunker down any further... Oh wait she just proved me wrong-

"What's that?" Shiloh pointed again, and I groaned as I hit my head on the steering wheel.

"I'm starving-" Harry started.

"Lit'rally." Retta finished.

"I still think you're part banshee." Harry chimed in.

"I agree." Shiloh cut in. "And you still haven't told me what that thing was!" He pointed to the road sign.

Okay, maybe I was expecting a bit much from three five year olds. I mean they couldn't stay quiet forever right?

"Okay, fine first we go to a secluded area. Then I'll get us something to eat." Then some (censored) butt-face had the audacity to give me the finger. Hello, twenty-three year old woman driving a two ton truck here! Can anyone say, is that man stupid?

"Why not now?" Asked Retta, she still sounded half-asleep.

"Uh, hello?" I pointed at her obviously, "you, no offense, look like a five-year old sized, mutant dog. We'll either be arrested by the government, have animal control called on us, or worse there could be Crytex workers there! You're like a giant neon sign saying, 'we're here, please capture and torture us!'" I ranted in monotone.

"Fine." Retta huffed and went back to sleep.

"Are we there yet?" Shiloh asked yet again.

"No." My voice is still at its characteristically flat tone.

"I still think you're part banshee, I mean that funky scre-" Harry started.

"Don' start. 'M tired 'nuff as is." I mumbled. It may be broad daylight, but I'm tired as hell, I haven't slept a wink in almost two weeks! Somehow I wonder if my brain functions are suffering any. But then again I'm used to going without sleep, working for Crytex doesn't exactly leave much room or time for sleeping.

"Okay, but what about-" Harry started again.

"Nuh, uh. Go t' sleep." I muttered and I'm yawning now. With a 'hmmph' Harry did go back to sleep, ahh, peace and quiet...

Then Shiloh disrupted it, "are we there yet?"

'This is going to be a long drive.' I thought despairingly.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Later...

"You need a check-up." I said at a stubborn Harrietta. We had driven down a small, country, dirt road and parked next to an abandoned gas station. Currently we were hiding in said abandoned gas station, and I am trying to get a stubborn, recently-turned-mutant, five-year old to agree to let me give her a check-up.

"No." Then she bared her teeth at me and growled.

"Don't you growl at me. I just saved your butt back there, plus I haven't had a decent night's sleep in almost two weeks, so don't push me!" I snapped, but my tone only rose slightly.

"Fine." Then she opened her mouth so I could see her sharp canines and the rest of her teeth. I touched the teeth and pressed them. Well, none of them were loose so that's a good sign. Once someone had botched an entire batch of Hunterz and they were supposed to have sharp teeth, their teeth were sharp but unfortunately they all fell out immediately after they bit something.

"Okay now flex your jaw." She looked at me funny. "Open your mouth as far as it can go."

"Well why didn't ya say so?" So Harrietta opened her mouth, and I heard a cracking noise, like when someone cracks their joints. Her

jaw had just come completely unhinged and the top part of her jaw, which is supposed to be part of the skull, jutted forward.

"Okay you can stop now." I'm kinda glad that both Harry and Shiloh were awake right now, at least we wouldn't have to go through an explanation and demonstration twice.

"That's creepy," then Harry smiled, "but wicked."

"I've seen weirder." Shiloh said, well, what can I expect? The kid practically grew up where Hunterz were being created almost everyday. So this ,kind of thing wasn't very new to him...

"Okay close your mouth." I stopped pressing on her teeth. Her top jaw seemed to have 'sunk' back into her skull, but her lower jaw kinda just hung there. Retta moved it upwards but she couldn't seem to get it to close, or close to closing.

I got tired of watching her struggle to re-hinge her own lower jaw, so I fisted a handful of her black hair, grabbed the unhinged jaw, lined it up with its original placement on her skull and slammed it upwards. There was a popping crack as her jaw snapped into place, she flinched violently and recoiled once I let go.

"That hurt." She whimpered as only a five-year old could as she cradled her jaw.

"Sorry," I apologized, "I musta done it too fast. But you're going to have to work on re-hinging your jaw yourself, 'cause I'm not going to fix it every time you do that." I paused and stared at her eyes, the dark, crimson red irises seemed to reflect the sunlight that filtered through the boarded windows of the old station. The place was pretty much empty apart from the rotting wood shelving and all the mice, dust and insects.

"Turn your head." I said softly, and surprisingly she did as I asked. I traced my fingers over her aching jaw and put pressure the part where the jaw had been re-connected to the skull.

She protested, "ow! That still hurts ya know!"

"Well your jaw should be fine," I said as I removed my fingers from inspecting her jaw, "open and close your eyes now."

"What?"

"Why does she have ta do that?" Shiloh wondered aloud.

I rolled my eyes in annoyance, "Just do it."

"Grr..." But she complied and I could see a nictitating membrane that took her longer to open. "It takes to long..." Retta muttered.

"Well no wonder," I held one of her eyes open gently, "you've got about three extra eyelids now, so they total to four. Also, judging by the way that your jaw unhinged you've got more muscles in your face that allow different actions."

"Like what?" Shiloh said with child-like curiosity.

"Well you should be able to re-hinge the jaw yourself by flexing certain muscles, also your four eyelids are probably there to protect your eyes, you might be able to open and close them individually... With a little practice... If the whole mutation doesn't go horribly wrong..."

"That's a comf'rtin' thought." She said sarcastically, I rolled my eyes."

"Also it seems that your top jaw is not attached to your skull. It must be connected to your skull with a stretchy cartilage or something..." Wait a minute, these are five year olds, they're not going to know what I'm talking about!

"I only understood a little o'er half'a what ya said." Harry commented dryly.

"Can you concentrate on what you used to look like, kid?" I poked her in the ribs, damn I can count them! Just like her brother, except the fur makes it more difficult to see...

"Of course I know wha' I look like! I have white hair, grey eyes, no tail, no fur, no claws and most certainly no sharp and pointy teeth!" She snapped, well she was pretty annoyed when I poked her in the ribs. But as she ranted the fur receded and soon disappeared along with her claws, teeth and tail. Lastly her face changed and the

muzzle and disappeared from her now human face. She was human, and I suppose, again.

She was about the same height as Harry, they just as I remembered them before I had my 'fake death'. Her albinism induced white hair and storm grey eyes. It was really surprising to know that they were twins really. With Harry and his messy black hair and emerald green eyes that seemed to pierce your soul.

Shiloh well with his fluffy mass of silky black hair, he'll probably grow up to be what people call a real heartbreaker. But I'm not really into that romance stuff, most of it sounds like a boatload o' crap to me. But then again those are just the very few cliché romance novels that I've read talking. He's got these black eyes that seem to shine, ever since we left the facility he hasn't stopped smiling. He's got the spark of life that I really don't ever recall having really...

"-and I- Hey I'm back to normal." She had stopped ranting and stared at her now human body.

"Well I think that you might be able to switch between them." Her face lit up as if she just had an ingenious idea. "But not now, we've got to lay low and get out of the UK first."

"Should we start by getting rid of that truck?" Harry pointed out.

"Yes. But first we're going to get something to eat-"

I was interrupted by Retta, "You said that two hours ago."

"And we're getting to it!" So we all piled into the truck and drove off, it's a lot more difficult to drive a delivery truck than most people would realize.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Ten minutes later...

We had stopped at a gas station with a small sandwich shop there. It actually hadn't taken long to get off the country road and get back to civilization. I'm using the money that I'd swiped from those Crytex workers earlier, heh heh, suckers...

"I'll have a, hey what do you guys want?" I asked in my usual toneless voice as I looked at the kids behind me, my brown hair falling from my hastily tied bun. The clerk looked at the kids with a false sweetness that made me sick to my stomach, it reminded me of my mother...

"I want a foot-long sandwich with everything on it!" Retta jumped up and proclaimed. The clerk nodded and took in the sight of Retta's clothing, she had changed already into something that was in her backpack earlier. But it was kind of dirty, and worn through. Then the woman snorted and asked me what they would want, as she looked at Retta's hair disapprovingly. It was a bit grimy and all three of the kids in general really needed a bath, come to think of it I do too...

"I can order for myself!" Harry and Shiloh exclaimed at the same time, "we want what Retta's got!"

"Okay." Oh good lord if I see anymore of her sickeningly fake sweetness, I think I'm going to be sick. It also may have been the older woman's cheap perfume that she may have dumped all over the place. It reeked.

"I'd like a foot-long sandwich, on wheat, everything on it." I reached into my pocket for the wallet I'd previously pilfered.

"That'll be ten pounds miss." Her overly cheery voice was nothing like Shiloh's. His voice, would radiate joy, warmth and child-like curiosity, and it's actually real. This woman was pompous and prissy, and I don't even know her! I've spent enough years on Crytex field duty to know how to read a person. I don't need to even have psychic powers or anything like that, to know that this lady is a huge prat.

I forked over the ten pounds and I watched the other employee make the sandwiches. Then I was handed the sandwiches and we immediately rushed back to the truck. Once we got there, we just started chowing down. The first bite was heaven, roast beef, lettuce, onions, tomato, mustard, pickles, salt, pepper, some type of oil, mayo, hey there's even cheese on this thing! This is so much better that the crap they feed us back at the Crytex facility!

The kids are inhaling their sandwiches though. Retta is taking gulping bites, chewing quickly then swallowing. Shiloh's never tasted a sandwich so he's savoring every bite, and Harry is eating like his sister is...

"This is the best food ever!" Shiloh exclaimed between bites, and surprisingly he didn't choke. For once though in this whole crazy day, I actually felt like normal person having a normal meal.

'This, feels familiar...' I thought wistfully, I shook the thought off though. 'No, I don't need to remember...'

"So," Retta ate the last bite of her sandwich. "we're going to Italy right?"

"Maybe, or if you guys want someplace else, that's okay too." I started the truck and we drove off again. Two miles down we hit another gas station for various reasons...

"You should have said so earlier!" I hissed in annoyance. This gas station was pretty big, more like a rest stop, there were a lot of people, truckers, bikers, vacationers and tourists(though I don't see the difference between the two), hell I could see people from all walks of life here. I was partially grateful for the crowd though, it provided good cover.

"Well I din't have ta go th'n!" Shiloh said as he, Retta and Harry came out of the bathroom, then he twitched. For the past half hour he'd started twitching, nothing major, just an occasional twitch of his right arm. It the lack of shock therapy, after the sudden absence of it, the shot nerves are probably reacting badly to the lack of trauma because they're so used to it. He'd probably twitch like that for the rest of his life most likely, I sighed. Damn, as if we need any more reminders of the hellhole we just drove from, last freaking night.

I stared at them. They're annoying, but kinda endearing in a way. Don't get me wrong I've only seen kids in a scientific(coughsickexperimentscough) setting or out on field duty. Most of them strike me as overtly-dependent brats, but that's just my opinion.

I stepped out of the truck and went to the nearest ATM; for the past few months I've been siphoning money from the company's fund into

a bank account, that, and saving paychecks from my cover jobs on field duty. It was reckless, dangerous, risky and all the times I was almost caught, it scared the living shit out of me. But I suppose I should count my blessings, some other brainwashed Tech got blamed for it instead. I suppose it was better that it happening to me...

Damn, Crytex has really killed off my conscience hasn't it? Haha, I'm really screwed up aren't I?

Then the ATM spat out twenty-five hundred pounds. I grabbed the notes and stuffed them into my pocket, then headed back to the truck. I sighed, we need to get a smaller vehicle, the truck is waaaay too conspicuous.

"Look we're going to Italy right?" I leaned back against the seat, "well we've got too..." I stopped, there in the crowd was a familiar face, one that I'm not happy to see.

Tech-802, taller than I am(he's six feet and two inches tall), slightly tanned complexion, dirty blonde hair and soft brown eyes, and broad shoulders. He looks like a nice person, but looks are deceiving, he's one of the highest performing Techs in the facility. Every target he's found, he's caught and brought them as test subjects to the facility. Every already given target, he's either captured or killed, depending on the assignment. Since seven years ago, he's never brought failure, he's the 'perfect' Tech. That, and a complete maniac. He's what I call a Cause-Fanatic, completely taken over by the way Crytex raised him, he was taken from an orphanage somewhere in France and was raised by the core values of Crytex. He can shoot a fly at five hundred yards without killing it, though he'd probably kill it anyways. In short, he's a homicidal maniac completely loyal to Crytex in every way with gunmanship skills that rival my own.

"Guys," I whispered to the kids hurriedly, "that guy's looking for us." I could see numb horror start to swirl in Shiloh's eyes, and Harry was starting to look angry, Retta was just blank as if lost in thought.

"So-" Retta stared, but I gave her a look and she stayed quiet.

"Looks like I'm going to have to make my crime list longer..." I muttered to myself. Then I muttered to them without bending down or looking at them, "go to the back and take the employee exit, don't

get caught." Harry nodded solemnly, and grabbed his sister's and Shiloh's hands before they could object and dragged them off to follow the instructions I gave them.

I watched them from the corner of my icy gaze. I suppose a person could describe my gaze like that, I don't betray emotion freely, back in Crytex doing so without "proper cause" as they call it, would end with a painful reprogramming. Then I realized that I had been absentmindedly rubbing the scars on my hairline.

'Pull yourself together Reed!' My instincts screamed at me. I frowned at the use of my last name, it just reminded me of how I got involved with this mess in the first place. When I was abandoned by those uncaring, selfish f-

'Damnit Reed focus!'

I shook my head, trying to rid myself of those thoughts. 'This is no time for a walk down memory lane Freedom!' I mentally scolded myself. I turned and walked forward at a brisk pace, and ran right into someone.

"Hey watch it!" Spat the teen I had just run into, he had spiked blue hair and more piercings than I care to count. "What are ya bloody blind bitch?"

"Well sorry." I said sarcastically, "I could've sworn that you weren't standing in that particular spot on the floor when I last looked."

"Huh, whatever, watch where you're goin' next time." He huffed and stormed past me. When he got back to his gaggle of friends across on near the McDonalds on the south side of the place I heard him complaining about, "bloody blind bitches." Damn, if I had the time I would've smashed his face in, I don't care how young he is...

But back to business, I stuck my hands into my pockets as I left the gas station slash rest stop. I walked around to the truck and grabbed Harry and Retta's backpacks, then I reached into my pockets and the contents jingled with promise of a clean escape.

'I always watch where I'm going f-tard .'I smirked with a touch of triumph on my usually blank expression.

'I wonder when that baka is going to notice that his keys are missing?' Then shrugged to myself, 'oh well...'

Then with that, I left to hijack car...

A/N: THANKS TO ALL MAH WUNNERFULICIOUS REVIEWERS! Just when you thought they left Crytex behind, yeah I know it gets annoying but the action ain't over 'til the fat lady sings! Who is Tech-802? Well, I did describe him, but what do we really know? Well, anyways, yeah now you know Freedom's last name! If you still don't know then WHY THE F- didn't you read the story? (Coughs) sorry, but anyways, yeah just when you thought there were home free, well they're not out of the woods yet. You know about Retta's mutations and stuff and Harry yeah, he knows when to not argue. I think this was a very productive chapter. Sorry it took so long, I had final exams, and a research report to take care of. It's my second day into my summer vacation and I plan on updating like crazy baby! But ya'll PLZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ review okay? I will update as much as I can now that I'm on summer vacation, yeah, my summer vacation didn't start until June 10. PLZ REVIEW!

SCIENCE/FACTS: A nictitating membrane is a scientific(fancy, schmancy word for the extra eyelid on a shark)

FLAMES POLICY: All FLAMES shall be used to roast marshmallows for myself, my cousin, and our muses.

NOTE: I do not condone, the stealing of anyone's car keys nor their cars. It's a crime that I think can get you sent to jail(I don't read laws, except the stupid ones like how you can't push live mooses out of moving airplanes in Alaska)

Chapter 17: Chase Chronicles: A Guns-Crossed Promise

Harry's POV...

Freedom had been tense. She told us to sneak out back, Shiloh and Retta looked like they wanted to argue so I grabbed their hands and pulled them with me to the back of the rest stop place. My stomach still feels a bit heavy from that sandwich, I really didn't taste it, but at the time I was too hungry to care about the taste. Shiloh's happy-go-lucky expression had faded into a look of nervous anxiety as we waited for Freedom.

'She wouldn't go off without us would she?' I thought, I don't think she'd do that. Though we don't really know her that well, I mean okay I thought she was a dead librarian who got fired for trying to help us, now we find out she's alive and she works for a crazy company that kidnapped my sister. But she's actually trying to help us and stuff, and now we're most likely going to be chased down by someone who works there and wants to catch us. My sister's a cool kick-ass mutant I don't think I've ever seen anyone so cheery as Shiloh. Yeah, my life just got more complicated, I wonder if Mum and Dad miss Retta and me?

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Somewhere Else... (It's anyone's guess where) 3rd person POV...

A woman looked at crowds, masses of people passing by but none of them the ones she so desperately wanted to see.

That woman was Lily Potter. So far for the past few months, they'd been searching and searching, and haven't seen hide nor tail of her daughter or her youngest son. James and her had been frantic, but all too soon the search had died down, and Harrison James and Harrietta Noelle Potter were both simply declared missing, but assumed dead, and were soon forgotten by Wizarding society.

But somewhere, there were those who wept for time lost.

Like a Godfather.

Like a werewolf.

Like two parents, who wept for time that they had so horribly wasted.

And a Headmaster, whose singular mistake in the judgment of someone's character, had started it all.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Back to Harry's POV...

A dark blue car pulled up in front of us. I tensed up, was this the person who wanted to catch us?

The window rolled down, it was Freedom! She got out of the car hurriedly and opened the door, we all piled in and the car door banged shut behind us. Shiloh had shoved me against something lumpy on the seat by accident.

"Watch it!" I made a face at him. Then I found what the lumpy thing was, mine and Retta's backpacks! Freedom remembered them! But where'd the car come from?

"Where'd the car come from?" Retta asked my question before I could. Darn, I looked at her with an annoyed face.

"I borrowed it." Freedom pulled out of the parking lot and drove onto the highway. I stared at her, "okay fine, I stole it."

"Isn't tha' c'lled gran' th'ft auto?" Retta muttered curiously.

"Yes, but on top of my current record, I think that it really won't make much of a difference." Freedom didn't even bat an eyelash at me as she answered.

"Why're we goin' so fast?" I asked.

"Heh," Freedom mouth twitched wryly, "we're not outta the woods yet."

"Whatcha mean?" I said, I want the whole story.

"Crytex sent s'mebody after us." Shiloh said in a quiet tone.

"Not just anybody," Freedom pressed on the gas pedal and the car lurched forward with even greater speed, "Tech-802."

"Who's Tech-802?" I asked.

"Hah, he's a Crytex fanatic." She tossed a strand of shortish-medium length brown over her shoulder as it seemed to be bothering her, "he'd jump off a cliff without the parachute if that god-forsaken company told him to."

/But what'sssss he doing coming afffter ussss?/ Valerius had been so quiet lately, well it's nice to know that he's still listening to what's going on.

"Bu' what's he doin' comin' after us?" I repeated Valerius's question.

"Ain't it obvious?" Freedom's shoulders shook, "he's going to take us back to that hellhole, or kill us if he can't do the first one." I saw Shiloh sink into the seat as if it would protect him from our implied possible demise. "But I won't let them!" Freedom had more emotion than ever, her monotone had temporarily disappeared, then she slammed one of her fists against the dashboard, "but they're not getting us without a fight! If we're going to run, then we'll give 'em a run for their money!"

"Bu' what if 'dey catch us?" Shiloh muttered quietly.

"I won't let them. Even if they did, I'd die before I'd let them get you guys." Freedom was driving way over the speed limit now, but she didn't seem to care.

"How c'n ya be sure?" I murmured quietly.

She looked at us, one by one, then she gave a cocky smile instead of her normally blank expression, "I won't let 'em get you, guns-crossed."

"Wha's guns-crossed?" I yawned out tiredly.

"A promise I won't break, young lightning." I looked at her with respect, then her cocky smile faded back into the blank expression, "go to sleep kid, you'll need it." I could hear sadness in her voice.

"Where'd ya get th' guns-crossed thin'?" I asked.

"Just a thing kid, a story for another day." Her voice was laced with even more melancholy.

"S'rry."

"No need kid, and thanks." She had slowed the car down a bit.

"F'r what?"

"In the hallway, you made a bolt of lightning. You saved my hide back there, just saying thanks." The corner of Freedom's mouth gave a slight twitch upwards. "No go to sleep brat."

"Hey! I'm not a-" I yawned, "brat..."

I had started to doze, like Shiloh and Retta. But Freedom's words comforted me, she made me feel like we were gonna really make it, or she'd die trying. She may act all tough and stuff, but I think deep down in the short time we've known her, she's got the heart of gold.

My lips curved into a small smile as I felt my eyelids droop as I fell asleep. It wasn't a nap, it was true honest to goodness rest. Just what all of us need...

'What a day...' Then my thoughts went blank as I took a trip to dreamland...

A/N: Hey sorry short chapter, but I wanted to write something mushy. I need sorta mushy right now, my Dad died on June 13 at 12:12 A.M. PLZ review and tell me what you think, again sorry that this chap is short but I'm introducing a great soon to be re-occurring theme here so plz just give me compliments, constructive criticisms, nags to update, and what you thought of the story. You people don't review, thanks to those who do, but to the ones who aren't, plz review. I once again apologize for this chapter being short, but I've already said what the problem is. PLZ review and tell me what you think...

Tell me, what do think of Freedom so far? I'd like to know that too...

MUST READ!

THIS IS A VOTE! Whatever gets the most votes will influence if not completely seal my choice in this matter. I am basically picking up the ENTIRE Harry Potter timeline (present, Marauders, etc.) and moving it foreward so I can at least be somewhat accurate about technology and movies I might happen to mention.

What year(timeline thingie) should the story be best suited in?

The choices are: (note: you cannot pick other timelines, I just want to know what year

1: 2000

2: 2002

3: 2005

4: 2006

5: 2008

6: 2009

Chapter 18: Chase Chronicles: Of Circuses and Strays

Harry's POV...

I awoke to silence, it was dark out. I looked to my right, Shiloh and Retta are still asleep. Man, I feel so energized! Wait, where's Freedom? We were parked in front of a gas pump, I can see Freedom outside putting gas into the car.

I yawned as I stretched out. Man this is so much roomier than the cupboard! Freedom got into the drivers' seat again after she put the gas pump back and paid the machine.

"Heh, you kids were sure tired," Freedom started the car, "almost thought you break the world's longest sleeping record the way you were going." I looked at the inside that I mostly ignored before. It was had a back seat and two front seats, there were some soda stains on the floor too. Freedom started the car and ran the air conditioning, I read about it in a book at the library once. But that seemed like lifetimes ago...

Then we pulled out of the gas station and were once again on the road.

"W'll I was dragged aroun' by a random knife-wielding guy in a black cloak to the f'cil'ty ta rescue my sister." I muttered, then I giggled.

"What? Is there something on my face?" Freedom said while attempting to look cross.

"OMG a giant cupcake." I quoted someone.

"Ya know if that didn't almost get us killed, it is kinda funny." Freedom's face is the epitome of deadpan.

"I'm hungry..." I said as my stomach growled. Trash can food can taste good sometimes, but it doesn't fill you up very much.

"Yeah, next town we'll go stop then stock up on supplies and stuff." She was indicating my already worn out clothes, and Retta's; and Shiloh, well, he's wearing shorts that look like boxers for crying out loud!

Yep, our clothes officially suck.

Then again Freedom was in long brown pants and a t-shirt that looks like it been through the mill. Her shoes were faded blue running shoes, my gaze went to the rough bandage on her upper left arm, where the bullet had gone through.

"Does it hurt?" I asked. Freedom's face betrayed nothing.

"Like hell kid." Her tone was empty, her voice sounds so dead, as if life had really run her over. And not a word was spoken for a long time after that...

Later...

/You humansssss need to pull ovvver.../ Moaned Valerius woozily, /I think I'm going to be car-ssssssick.../

"Can snakes throw up?" I wondered out loud. Again Freedom didn't answer, she had done nothing but look at the road and drive for the past two hours. She hadn't stopped at the next town as promised, but just kept driving like a maniac with her eyes trained on the road ahead of us.

"Hn." Her answers are getting very generic.

"Are we gonna eat soon?" Shiloh asked as he had finally woken up, Retta woke up too, but she went right back to sleep.

"Yeah, 'kay." I think Freedom hasn't slept at all yet. Maybe that's why she's so quiet...

"You 'lright?" I asked.

"Be fine in a while." Then she turned after the next two exits... I couldn't read the sign, Freedom was driving too fast...

Freedom's POV...

'Shopping is fun, yeah right! Not when you're on the run from a psycho assassin it's not!' I don't understand how other women of this day and age can actually enjoy this, because I certainly don't!

"I like this one!" Shiloh had picked out five tie-dye t-shirts and showed them to me. I had no energy to spend on expressing my emotions, my mouth didn't even twitch.

"Pick three, and look around for other stuff you like." I said to him tonelessly, he jumped up and tossed two of the tie-dye shirts back to where the clothes on sale were hung. I went and picked up essentials in the kids section of the store. Which included underwear, boxers, shirts, pants, shorts, socks... The kids' sizes are pretty easy to guess, considering how small they are...

'Oh crap I haven't fed them yet!' I may be able to go with little food for about two weeks, but I can't expect them to do the same! I mentally berated myself, two weeks of almost zero sleep makes me forget things, but at least I won't start hallucinating yet...

I quickly went to where the kids were looking at t-shirts, jumpers and shorts. I looked at them, "Hey guys pick one jumper each, and tell me what color shirts you guys like outta the ones I've got."

"I call the smiley shirts!" Called Shiloh as he held up two swirly tie-dyed t-shirts with bright yellow smiley faces on fronts, oddly the bright obnoxious color appealed to me. Then again, I've been wearing the same uniform for the last sixteen years of my life, so anything different would be fine and dandy to me...

The next hour went by, I was antsy, anxious, nervous and above all, tired. Damn, I feel like I'm about to just drop and fall asleep on the floor...

I had picked up a bathing suit for Retta, swim trunks for Harry and Shiloh, shirts, shorts, underwear, boxers for the boys, socks, and a pair of sneakers and sandals for each of them. I had also gotten a duffel bag to put it all in, and Shiloh had chosen a dark blue knapsack with a yin yang symbol on the back. I felt a smile tug at my mouth as I watched them actually enjoy the shopping...

I also learned something about them as I watched them.

Retta liked darker, cool colors. Like black, dark brown, army green, dark orange, the darker shades of any color really, she also seemed to be repelled like a vampire from garlic by the colors yellow and pink.

Harry seemed to love pretty much any color and shade, except for maroon, magenta, and other obscure shades of red and purple. He also avoided lime green like the plague, but like his sister seemed to like army green and brown.

Shiloh, is another case altogether. He, like Harry and Retta, seems to love all colors. But he he's picking bright, obnoxious colors and patterns. He seemed to favor bright tie-dye and rainbow striped socks, he had gotten a dark blue beanie hat to cover the fluffy black hair on his head. Bright red, yellow, bright orange, dark blue, darn the kid's going to be a walking rainbow...

"Shiloh, pick some stuff that doesn't stand out so much too, 'kay?" I said he nodded excitedly, he's twitching again. Just a reminder of what those Crytex bastards have done...

I'm too tired to express my 'emotions' right now. I went to pick out clothes for myself, I picked out a couple of t-shirts, a couple of dark green tank tops, and long cargo shorts, plus all the essentials that I don't feel like listing... Gah, I hate shopping... Then I went to where the jeans were, and I fell in love. There hanging on the hooks was a pair of loose jeans, embroidered with light pink flowers with light green threads for the stems and leaves. I have to have them, so I snagged a pair and put it with the rest of the clothes.

"That it guys?" I looked at the clothes selection, not too much it can all fit in the duffel bag, plus their backpacks...

Which reminded me to pick up a messengers bag for myself, it could also double as a back pack if I wanted it to. It was a shade of dark brown with no images on it, just a plain bag, except for all the extra pockets. I love the pockets! Inner pockets, side pockets, pockets, pockets, pockets!

'Oh god I think I'm majorly starting to lose it...' I thought as I helped the kids take our purchases to the counter to pay for them. The woman smiled at the children, and rang up our purchases, I put everything in a cart up to the car. Once there I got rid of the plastic

and tags I placed them into the duffel bag and arranged some of them into the kids backpacks and my messengers' bag.

"Hey this shirt is awesome!" Shiloh was wearing a tie-dye t-shirt with a bright yellow smiley face on the front, he also wore the dark orange zip up jumper.

"Kay I know I forgot, but it's time to eat." I looked and spotted a restaurant called Fujiyama. Then we walked there, we sat down and stared at the menu. I think this is the first restaurant I've actually gone into with the purpose of eating since, well, sixteen years ago before I was taken under the wing of Crytex.

"I want to try the sushi!" Shiloh yelled. I glared at him for that, but he was undeterred.

"Okay guys you can get whatever you want and it doesn't matter how much you want, because I'm paying." I said to them. I'm still too tired to show emotions right now, damn, I won't be able to drive like this.

Soon we ordered and then we ate, darn those kids could put away food! I can understand Retta's predicament, she probably has a higher metabolism now, but honestly the other two? Those kids won't cease to amaze me, all of them ordered the sushi deluxe, which gave you twelve pieces of sushi and six tuna rolls. They also ordered the salmon and steak tepanyaki lunch, I ordered the sushi, and a steak and scallops combo. The man was nice though, the kids loved watching him cook right in front of us. The combo meals gave us fried rice and veggies with our meat, it was delicious. But I think I'm still thoroughly amazed about the fact that those kids were able to finish every last bite of their individual meals.

I ordered more sushi to-go. In case they got hungry while I was driving, crap my vision's getting blurry. The contacts I'm wearing feel like they're fused to my eyeballs now...

There was an optometrist's next door, somehow I ended up getting round glasses, like Harry's. Without the contacts(that were just removed), I have terrible vision, I couldn't shoot the broad side of a barn without them.

Now, I have big, round glasses, although now that I look in the mirror it kind of looks good on me, with my icy blue eyes staring behind them. Okay no more staring at myself in the mirror! We still have stocking up to do!

At the Walgreens store, we picked up strawberry scented shampoo, conditioner and body wash. Plus the essentials, like toothpaste, toothbrushes, a couple small hair combs, and any snack that the kids wanted.

I also picked up a first aid kit, and extra first aid stuff. Did ya know that you need a prescription to get cold medicine now? Or was it something else? Damn, the lack of sleep is really getting to me, despite the new glasses.

After another hour, we finally finished shopping, 'finally.' I have no clue why most women my age, which is twenty-three by the way, enjoy shopping as a favorite pastime.

But the assassin that was after us, which might have something to do with that...

We were on the road again, making good time. Then the kids saw a sign on the side of the road...

"A circus!" Harry exclaimed jumping in his seat.

"Can we go?" Shiloh chirped excitedly.

"Yeah can we?" Retta threw in her two cents.

"No." I answered. "We don't have time for-"

"Please?" Shiloh and Retta begged in unison.

"Pretty please, with a ton of cherries on top?" Harry asked in such a cute manner. They all looked at me, with puppy-dog eyes. Oh man, not the puppy-dog eyes, not the puppy-dog eyes...

"Pretty pwease?" Shiloh seems to have the cutest puppy-dog eyes of the bunch.

I sighed, "okay, fine. To the circus then..." I know this is gonna bite me in the butt later...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Harry's POV...

The circus was so colorful! I remember back at the Dursleys, they took Dudley to the circus but left my sister and I at Mrs. Figg's house. I remember that Mrs. Figg had lots of cats, it wasn't so bad though. Except that there was a lot of them, I tripped over a couple of them and they haven't liked me since...

Makes me glad that we're with Freedom now...

Then I saw a cat, silky black fur and white paws. It was slinking around the game tents in the circus slash carnival. Freedom had bought all of us cotton candy and whatever we wanted...

The cat looked thin, then someone kicked it and it retreated. I felt sorry for the cat...

"Hey Freedom, can I have a burger, pwease?" I asked her.

"Sure," She answered heading back to the stand, "you kids sure eat a lot." She remarked when she got back.

"Just hungry," I said, then I took the burger and looked for the cat. It was sitting on a wooden barrel. I came closer and it hissed at me, fluffing up its fur. "Sorry, but ya l'ked 'ungry," Then I placed down the burger on the ground, "here, it's yours." I looked up into the cat's intelligent yellow eyes, then I turned.

And I walked away, not looking back at the cat. I hoped the cat would be alright...

"Hey kid where were ya?" Freedom asked when I can back to the picnic table. I just smiled, and she scowled in annoyance.

"Now where'd Shiloh and Retta go?" I heard her say, then took my hand and we searched through the crowds, calmly, for Shiloh and my sister...

Why do I feel like somebody's following me?

Valerius grumbled about too much noise and distracted me from my thoughts....

With Shiloh and Retta... (3rd Person POV...)

"How could you get us lost?" Retta berated Shiloh, then his face flushed red.

"I don't know I swear this was where Freedom and Harry were..." He muttered to himself.

"Oh boy..." Retta smacked her forehead, the whole conversation would seem quite comical to a person watching them, two five years olds having an argument if they were lost or not.

"Let's go in there!" Shiloh grasped Retta's hand and had already dragged her in the tent before she could protest.

They watched the lion tamers in the huge ring cages with the lions. It was cool the first few seconds, then it started to get a bit boring...

"Hey look over there!" Shiloh dragged Retta out of the tent and out the back. There was nothing there, but it felt like there was something, Retta's eyes widened in a small realization.

"Hiding magic."

"What?" Shiloh was a bit confused.

"Hiding magic, someone's using magic to make something invisible." Retta answered him.

"Whoa." Was all Shiloh could say before he pulled Retta forward with him as he bounded forward. They both shuddered as they felt like they passed through something very cold. Then they could see everything.

There were cages of all sizes, with different animals, so many different species. But none of them were magical, Retta thought in disappointment.

Then they saw a cage with something that surprised them, a dog.

'Who would cage a dog?' Retta thought indignantly.

"Who would cage a dog?" Shiloh voiced her thoughts exactly. Over that past few days, he had been brought up to date about things in the outside world that he didn't know about due to his unfortunate time spent in the Crytex facility.

Then Shiloh, walked up to the dog. The dog was a German Shepherd, with short black fur on his back, the sides of his stomach, plus ears and head. The rest of him was a light brown, the dog's black eyes mirrored his own as he looked at him curiously.

"I don't think he should be locked up." Shiloh pouted, turned towards Retta.

"My words exactly." Retta said with an affirming nod.

"Then," then Shiloh punched the air above him dramatically, "Let's do it!"

The one phrase that sent the dominoes rolling...

A/N: Hello peoples! Sorry it took so long to update! I was updating one of my almost dead fanfics! PLZ REVIEW!

NOTE: If you haven't already guessed, the "strays" are the cat and the dog.

Cat – No name yet, long black fur w/ white paws & yellow eyes

Dog – No name yet, German shepherd (mostly black fur though), black eyes

Next time:

Circus Chronicles: Of Orange Eyed Tragedies (Note that this title could change if I fancy to change it)

Circus Chronicles: Of Orange-Eyed Tragedies

? 's POV...

My life

is one big tragedy

so here I sit

forever more,

I'm a freak,

An outcast among the realm of the living

so why,

am I still-

breathing?

It's so cold

and it hurts so much,

my tears,

they mean nothing

to anyone

The world is cruel

they ignore me,

my cries as I die slowly

here,

I don't mean to be a freak,

if I wasn't-

would you all

still laugh at my pain?

These thoughts echoed in my head as I jumped through the ring of fire, only to crash headfirst into it, burning my back as the flaming rings fell on top of me. I screamed, the crowd laughed, the whipped cracked and I blacked out...

Hello, my name is Nathaniel Scott Comhnall. I'm ten years old and I live in a freakshow.

Oh, and I'm a werewolf...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Nathaniel's POV...

I feel like crap, I was lying on my side in a cage. I heard that the bars were made of a meld of silver and titan-something. My back and shoulders hurt, must've been where the flaming rings hit me.

I whimpered in pain as I sat up and leaned against the back of my cage.

This circus I lived in may be bright, but the rainbow of beauty covers up its darker side.

"Ahh! Scott can you just feel that somehin' better is a comin'?" A man in a black magician's suit said in a heavy Italian accent as he strolled up to my cage, it was Adolfo Fausta, Italian magician extraordinaire.

He could showed and taught me how to do magic tricks. Picking locks and pockets, magic tricks, and the occasional throwing of fists.

But above all he emphasized morals and manners, how funny is that? Coming from the guy who taught me how to pick pocket and cheat. But then again, none of it is much use here sitting in my cage of deadly silver that burned to the touch.

Adolfo Fausta.

He was a Lycan.

But he is different from me, I can transform whenever I want, he can't. He is forced to transform on the full moon, I'm on half-moons. His transformation is a painful, agonizing experience that leaves him weak and sick. Yet, he presses on with a chipper attitude and a smile.

The only reason that he could walk around outside of his cage is that his has a curse collar on his neck. It left Lycans at the mercy of those who control the collar, yes contrary to belief there is a huge difference between Lycans and Werewolves.

Werewolves are born.

Lycans were created.

We Werewolves are supposed to hate him, but Adolfo is like a Father to me.

If it weren't for him, I'd surely be insane right now. Always there when I needed him, telling me that someday, we'll get out of this place. He promised to show me Italy, that he'd take me riding on a boat in Venice, and he'd show me all the restaurants and places that he saw growing up.

He was the first nice person I met when I first came here. I only remember one thing vividly, how I got here...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Flashback... (Warning: Depiction of brutal murder through a Child's Eyes, if extremely brutal murder disturbs you, DO NOT READ!)

I was scared.

Some men take me away, why?

Where am I?

It's cold and Mum and Father aren't here...

The mean man, he had a whip Father fought in front of Mum, and then they took sticks out and threw magic at each other.

Mum went down first, then there was a lot of smoke, the house was on fire...

Mum and Father were all covered in something red. The man laughed and kicked them and cracked his mean whip at Dad. Dad's skin was cut, the man kicked and beat Mum and Dad until they stopped moving.

Father was the last to go stop fighting. He punched, kicked, clawed, bit, screamed and threw spells until the man had all but won.

The fighting continued as the house continued to burn around them. But little by little, Father weakened, the man brutally snapped his bones and then kicked his back with a resounding snap. The man smiled, and moved to Mum, he said a weird magic word and Mum screamed. He said the word, over and over, Father cried.

Then the man said other words, and Mum screamed as her body convulsed and she stopped screaming. The man then cut her open with a knife and said something to Father, Father roared in outrage, but didn't move from his awkward position on the floor. The man just smiled and continued to desecrate Mum by cutting her.

Why didn't her chest rise? Why wasn't my Mum breathing anymore?

Father roared in outrage, but nothing happened as the man laughed in Father's face he took out a shiny knife, the smoke was getting in my eyes now.

The man looked down at Father, "scum like you," he smirked, "must die!"

Then the knife came down, I had no breath to scream, what followed is too terrible to describe.

I looked away.

When I looked around at the room, the sound of my gasp was swallowed up by the roaring flames licking the walls.

"Not so tough now, are ya, werewolf?" The man laughed as he continued with his slaughter.

I watched it all from the cabinet I had been hiding in, eventually, I heard a thud on the floor as the man dropped my Father. Then the man disappeared with a loud CRACK!

I found the courage to crawl out of the cabinet, and the sight before me made my stomach lurch.

But my horror was short-lived, as I heard another resounding CRACK! Over the roaring flames, then a sudden pain in my head, and then nothing.

A/N: That is the best murder scene I could write, if it doesn't live up to expectations please tell me what I did wrong and I will do my best to correct it for future purposes. Yes, I know what you're all thinking, 'oh man not another OC.' Don't worry he's been a long time coming, just so you know I'll tell you the stages of planning and revising that I did for him.

OOOOOOOOOOOOO

NAME: Nathaniel Scott Comhnall was originally going to be named Nathaniel Scott Wulf, but that changed.

AGE: When I came up with him originally, he was going to be over a hundred years old, but he was sort of "age frozen" when a bunch of magically enhanced toxic waste was dumped on him. But now, he was changed into a ten year old, EXACTLY 5 YEARS OLDER THAN HARRY, RETTA, & SHILOH

BACKSTORY: Originally I was going to have his backstory be that one of the Minister's of magic instituted a secret project that was supposed to "cure" lycanthropy. But unfortunately this could only be achieved by kidnapping a bunch of werewolves and performing horrible, sick experiments on them that usually resulted in them dying. THE BACKSTORY THAT I'M USING NOW IS SO MUCH BETTER AND THE OLD ONE IS NOT BEING USED, I WON'T TELL YOU WHAT HIS REAL BACKSTORY IS BECAUSE THAT WOULD SPOIL THE STORY.

OOOOOOOOOOOOO

Back to A/N: Okay with that little wonderful tidbit on info we'll all move on, (clears throat)

(In Cheesy Announcers Voice) = The plot thickens, will Harry and Freedom find Shiloh and Harrietta before they get into trouble? Will Shiloh and Harrietta free the dog? How does a traumatized Werewolf fit into all this? What is the difference between a Werewolf and a Lycan? Is there more to the story? What mysteries lie ahead for our heroes? Well find out on the next installment of, "Maelstrom Twins"!

Chapter 20: Circus Chronicles: Orange-Eyed Wolf

Nathaniel's POV...

Looks like another day, I squinted blearily as Adolfo walked up to my cage with some pilfered hamburgers, which I'm thankful for.

"Ah, don't a worry little one, I have a feeling. This day is a gonna be a better one!" Then he smiled warmly, "dontcha agree pup?"

I sighed and took a bite of the food, some days I wondered why he was so chipper. I wonder if they stick him on some sort of happy pill or something...

"I see a doubt in a your eyes, pup." A look of sadness crept into his amber eyes, "but a someday we will a free. You'll a see pup, someday, someday..." He trailed off wistfully, he began to absentmindedly scratch at the leather collar around his neck.

I felt a twinge of anger in my stomach, Adolfo was the nicest person ever! He didn't deserve to have a curse collar on his neck 24/7! The collar had a certain amount of silver that caused him pain for as long as he wore it, but when the Ringmaster would wave his hands and say a few words and Adolfo will be on the ground screaming in agony.

The collar can also force Adolfo to transform into his Lycan form, I've seen it happen before. It made him sicker than he already was, it also looked much different from my werewolf form. My werewolf form was actually more wolf-like than man-like. A Lycan body has more influence from the man side, so they look bonier with shorter fur most of the time. But werewolves have longer fur, plus our faces will get more wolf-like, longer muzzles, also when in werewolf form I noticed that Werewolves aren't as hunched over like the Lycans are.

There are tons of differences that I can list all day, but I'm bored now. Adolfo is still talking?

"Hey Retta gimme a hand wi' dis, will ya?" It was a small kid with black hair, he looked about five or something, there was a little girl with him too with white hair standing behind him whilst rolling her eyes. She followed him, and soon they were fiddling with the lock for twenty whole minutes, I watched them. I've never actually seen

someone try to open the cages before, well those who didn't put me back in that is.

They look about half my age, pretty short for their ages. Adolfo took on a worried expression as he approached them, thanks to my superior hearing I could hear the conversation.

"What are a two a kids doing a back here? Where a is a your Mother?" Adolfo questioned them.

"Um we're, uh..." The kid with black hair is a bad liar.

"Lost." The little girl mumbled.

"Yeah, lawst, right..." The boy nodded vigorously.

"Why're they all'in cages m'ster?" The girl asked.

"Um, well a, that is a, the a way it is." Adolfo finished lamely.

I smacked my forehead, they don't believe him... But wait, did they sound concerned?

"Tha's t'rr'ble. Mean, cr'el, bad, wha' kinda (censored) son of a (censored) (censored) does tha' ta any 'un?" The girl said, Adolfo looked surprised at the small child's language.

Adolfo began to herd them away from the cages, so they wouldn't meet the fate of those who find the cages...

Fates worse than death...

I curled up as I felt a type of bitter disappointment settle in my lupine stomach. Then the white-haired girl looked back, and her grey gaze locked with my orange one.

Grey flashed to dark red, and the three of them vanished from my line of sight...

They were gone, but my gut says I'll see 'em again...

Keeerrak!

The sound of the whip rattled the cages, I got up stiffly, wincing as my burns stretched a bit.

'Well, it's showtime.' I thought despairingly.

A/N: Hello! Yep, thank you all for reading! Please review! I like reviews! They inspire me to write more and more often! Please help inspire me by reviewing and tell me what you think! No flames, constructive criticism only. Thank you. And it's official, no more pivotal character OC to introduce anymore! YAY!

Chapter 21: Circus Chronicles: Gearing For a Fight

Harrietta's POV...

I looked back and I saw a big kid sitting in a cage, our gazes met for a brief moment, his eyes were orange like the sunset.

Then I felt a presence inside my mind, it didn't feel bad, just weird. I've felt that presence ever since I changed back to human, so far the presence had just been there, doing nothing, just watching everything that was happening around me. Then suddenly my eyes prickled for a brief second as the presence within my mind balked then calmed and disappeared.

I turned my head away, 'Man that was weird...' The man who was herding Shiloh and me away from the cages was pretty nice, his top hat smells like bread and a strange smell that I don't know.

He smelt like a type of smoke and like a dog, but different.

He introduced himself as Adolfo Fausta. He is really tall and skinny, with black hair and blue eyes. He is wearing a very worn black suit with an old red tie. He also had this curly mustache, basically he looked like Houdini.

He's a stranger, but I can tell that he means well, and that he's only concerned about someone or something not getting to us before our "mother" Freedom does.

"Well a," He stopped us near one of the crowded tents, "do you a see you're a mother anywhere?"

"Well, no..." Shiloh said quietly.

"There you guys are!" It was Harry, followed by a very deadpan Freedom with dark circles forming beneath her eyes, damn does that lady ever sleep?

"Where were you?" She asked flatly.

"We go' lost." Shiloh explained, "but this guy helped us find ya." Shiloh jerked a thumb at the Italian guy.

"Well thank you sir, sorry that my children bothered you."

"Not a problem, my lady." Then he threw something at his feet and exploded into a cloud of, doves? He had completely disappeared, there wasn't even a smell that told me he was there anymore. Heck I don't even know how to work this stupid really good sense of smell thing.

Recently my sense of smell has gotten much better, I can even tell where my brother is by his sme- Oh I'm an idiot! I could've smelt him out the entire time? AHHHGG! I feel like hitting my head many, many times on a really, really hard rock!

"Where were you two, really?" Questioned Freedom.

"There are these cages back there," Shiloh said, "all the animals are there!"

"In small cramped cages, I saw a kid there two, older than us. This place gave me the creeps and now I know why. Those people came in with whips, I heard 'em!" I felt my eyebrow twitch angrily and I clenched my fists even tighter. I felt my eyes prickle, like before.

"Retta." It was Freedom's deadpan voice that brought me out of my thoughts.

"What?" I snarled.

"I don't know if you haven't noticed but it will be very easy for you to get angry and lost control now. You've got to calm down." Her voice rose slightly as she whispered into my ear.

"But-"

"Come on Retta," said my brother, "You're eyes are goin' red, jus' calm down."

"But they're in cages," I emphasized, "I say we help."

"We should help free them or something." Harry said as he wrung his hands.

"Yeah man." Shiloh nodded in agreement.

Freedom smacked her forehead, and sighed, ""You crazy kids are gonna get me killed someday and I haven't even known two of you for that long." Then she smirked, "but let's head to the big top, if we want to know what going on in this place that ought to be the best place to start."

"But we should help them-" Harry started, "wait you're agreeing?"

"Yep, let's go." And with that Freedom herded us toward the Big Top.

"Why do I get the feeling that something bad's going to happen?" Harry said under his breath.

"Oh I'm sure it's jus' you," Shiloh gave a two thumbs up, "I mean what could poss'bly go wrong?"

"Be quiet, the three of you." Freedom ordered in a low voice as we picked our way through the crowd, Freedom stood in line to buy tickets for the show, we finally got to the front of the line.

"Three kids, one adult sir." Freedom said in a flat, cold tone like the snow that had started to fall, I can actually see that her tone with other people is much colder than her tone when she talks to us.

I looked at her eyes as she focused on what was ahead as we went with the crowd to find a seat for the show.

Freedom even got us popcorn and sodas to eat while watching.

Shiloh chattered excitedly in my ear, "ya know your eyes turn red when you're mad ya know Retta?"

"Hrm." I huffed back, but most of the conversation was drowned out by the noise of the crowd

It' s great that I don't have to wear my glasses anymore, but sometimes I'd rather not see. I think that beneath Freedom's monotone and kick-ass attitude there's a really nice person.

But, when I looked into her eyes as she focused ahead, her blue eyes were hard, cold, and empty. Like back at the creepy lab place...

She doesn't think...

I felt my eyes prickle again, everything smells wrong, I don't like this place and the weird presence in my head agrees with me! But we kept walking, walking to take a seat for our certain doom...

"Retta you're growling." Shiloh said, "and you look reeeally tense and like your teeth have gone all pointy and stuff." I relaxed and ran my tongue over my teeth, darn Shiloh is right, my teeth morphed.

My canines are sharp, my nails have gotten sharper, even my eyes are prickling. 'It's as if my body's gearing for a fight.' I thought gleefully, I mean it may sound weird, but ever since I turned into that beast back in the creepy lab place, I've never felt more powerful.

I sat in between my brother and Shiloh, the hood on the hoodie I'm wearing obscured my face.

Freedom had gone to get something, she came back after five minutes, I can smell gunpowder, what-?

'So,' I fisted my new cargo pants anxiously, 'she feels it too.'

Freedom had come back with her guns.

The lights dimmed as the spotlights swiveled and drums rolled.

Cracck!

A loud snapping sound rattled throughout the entire Big Top as music began to play, there was a brilliant flash and a man stood there.

White hair and wrinkles of age, his eyes obscured by a top hat. He dressed like Adolfo did, except his outfit looked much newer.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the man bellowed, lifting his head, "boys and girls, children of all ages, welcome," the man lifted his face and stared into the enraptured crowd. His nose like a knob, and his face crinkled, his short words had caused the loud crowd to silence in almost an instant, like magic. He cracked the shiny whip in his hand, I feel my lips curling. That whip made me angry like seeing the cages did.

I looked to my right, Harry was shivering. Suddenly it was as if a wave of pure cold just washed over me, I saw Freedom square her shoulders and her face remained passive.

I mimicked her.

"This is a circus where dreams come true! Please enjoy the show!" Then his eerie white eyes met mine as he gave a twisted smile as he said, "welcome to the Centurian Wonder Circus!" Then as if on cue the crowd around me roared.

I saw Freedom remain calm.

Then man turned away and the show began with the acrobats.

'Enemy.' Said a lone voice in my head, and I can't help but agree.

'Whatever you've got Ringmaster,' I thought as I dug my claws into the seat, 'bring it.'

A/N: Whoa, yeah I know I tried to make this as cliffie-ish as I could. Please review! I love you all, you all rock! Please REVIEW! Tell me what you all think! Especially if you have constructive criticism or helpful advice. No flames, those are mean and pointless wastes of time! Stay tuned for chapter 22! See ya'll then!

Chapter 22: Circus Chronicles: It's All Connected

Harrietta's POV...

The show wasn't that special.

But I was tense through the whole thing, my nerves are totally going shot.

Then the Ringmaster appeared within the tent center ring once again, every time he spoke I felt the compulsion to listen, but it wasn't mine, it just made me angrier.

"Now for the show you all came to see! Creatures gathered from the far reaches of the world, rare, exotic and dangerous! Tamed and captured, for you to see here tonight, ladies and gentlemen, I give you monsters!" He cracked the silver whip as he signaled the animal handlers.

"Up first, feast your eyes on an ice phoenix! The last of its kind, here for you all to see!" Then a veiled cage was brought to the center of the ring.

He unveiled the cage, revealing a light blue and white bird. It was like a hawk only bigger, with longer tail feather, and its flight feathers and beak were a light shade of icy blue and her crest was snow white.

But she looked sad, and who wouldn't be, she was like a prisoner on display. They let her out of the cage as she flew around, I could see something on her leg, it was like a black metal band. I turned and saw Shiloh staring at the bird enraptured.

Oh yeah, no duh, he had ice powers, and that thing was an ice phoenix.

But soon we had seen many freaks and "monsters", I hate the word freak, at least when it's directed to people who are just different.

"I give you werewolves!" The Ringmaster said as mist filled the stage. But my eyes are better now, then I saw it.

It was that Adolfo guy, he was in the cage and he was transforming. His mouth was open, as if he was screaming in agony as his body metamorphosed into something more wolf-like, but I no-one could hear. I saw another cage within the mist, it was that kid with the sunset orange eyes.

The Ringmaster cracked the whip and the boy morphed, he didn't look like he was in pain but he was afraid.

I felt my rage grip me, how dare that (censored) son of a (censored) (censored) do that to people? It pissed me off! I almost got up when Freedom put her hand on my shoulder and held me back.

I can tell from the look in her eye, she probably had some sort of a plan cooked up. I'm too jumpy, I know that, but this place is majorly creeping the hell outta me.

The kid jumped through flaming hoops and to stand on little stands. He was more wolf-like than the creature Adolfo had turned into, Adolfo was more bony and his fur was way short, unlike the kid he looked like his morph was more complete.

Adolfo looks like he tried morphing into a wolf and got stuck in the middle. There was also a difference, in their behavior, the kid looked more fearful of the Ringmaster's whip while Adolfo roared, howled and snapped his teeth at the Ringmaster like a wild beast.

The Ringmaster made a show of it, cracking his whip at Adolfo's wolf-like head, actually hitting him across the face and shoulders, the collar he was wearing seemed to dig into his neck because it was too small.

I felt pity and angry at the same time. Orange-eyes as I called him, was more like that Wolf-Man that I saw in a movie poster for a werewolf movie, his face was longer like an actual wolf's and he had long pitch-black fur. His claws were black and they stuck out a bit.

Freedom kept me from standing up again, telling me to wait.

Then the show ended with the crowd's roaring applause as Mr. Fausta was snapping angrily, leaping and twisting as he was tied down and carted away.

The show continued, I heard Valerius hiss a string of extremely rude remarks, but like where do you think I learn all my insults from?

Freedom remained unemotional as ever, but I know she's got a plan, I just wish I knew what...

Only time will tell I guess...

OOOOOOOOOOOOO

After the Show...

Freedom's gone ahead to do whatever, she didn't even tell us what was going on! She made us wait in the car! This stinks!

"This sucks," complained Shiloh as he crossed his arms grumpily.

"Ditto." I huffed.

"I say we go out there, kick some ass, an' take some names!" My brother posed dramatically.

"You forget, we're five year olds!" I snapped.

"With superpowers!" Shiloh retorted back.

"I say let's do it!" Harry piped up as he hopped out of the car, I rolled my eyes and followed my brother and my friend toward the big top. But this time, I decided to stick in my input.

"Okay, if you two wanna be idiots then fine, bu' we can't jus' march up 'dere and go all out fight on 'em. They'd kick our butts!" I smirked at the boys' clueless looks, "If we wanna win, we gotta go all stealth-like...

They both agreed to my idea, I just hope that will be enough to not get ourselves killed. I felt pain through my fingers as my claws emerged and black fur coat my arms and hands.

Shiloh looked like he was concentrating hard, but nothing happened.

"What're ya doin'?" I deadpanned.

"Tryin' ta do that icy thing that happened back at the facility." Shiloh answered.

"Well hurry up or go back ta the car." I snarled unintentionally.

"Got it!" Shiloh's skin started to take on a slight blue tone and his hair turned blue, white wisps of cold chilled air drifted up out of his mouth.

I felt like a there was something welling inside me, but no matter how hard I tried to reach for it, it just stayed there. I couldn't see what it was, but I have claws and teeth so I'm happy.

Time to sneak in...

Freedom's POV...

Click, clack, clickclick, clack, click

I typed furiously, staring at the computer code flashing on the screen. Hacking computers was one of my specialties.

'Come on, work.' I thought in something akin to nervousness, I hated that. It's like my natural fight of flight response just went up seven notches. I'm trained to infiltrate, kill, and steal, but hacking a circus computer unnerves me? Could not being under pressure be actually dulling my ability?

Creee, clickety, clackety, cleeeeeek.

Hah, got it! The screen flashed to the main interface, holy, this looks a lot like... I felt a frown pull at my

I clicked a file icon labeled, EXPTS File.

A password bar flashed up. I hit familiar keys, if this is what it looks like this combo should work.

The computer beeped in affirmation as the file popped open onto the screen, with it I saw faces of children and animals. I clicked one.

EXPERIMENT#23635506940ABX

Name: Nathaniel Scott Comhnall

BASE: ALPHA C.

POSSIBILITIES: D.E.H.S., D.B.E., D.D., D.E.A.T.H.

I clicked another file, oh, god this computer was-!

I stuck the USB into the slot, and started clicking and typing madly, my hands were shaking and I could feel beads of sweat forming on my forehead. I looked at the files further, I almost clicked the file entitled: D.E.A.T.H. but I didn't, instead I stuffed the USB into my pocket and then I clicked a different file.

'Oh shit.' This whole thing has been too easy, this place was-! Everything made sense, it was all connected!

"This is-" I said as I turned around to leave, only to end up facing the Ringmaster, pointing a gun at my head.

"A trap?" He sneered, "How perceptive." My reflexes caused me to draw one of the guns at my belt.

And a lone gunshot rang into the night, signaling the beginning chaos left in its wake.

A/N: Evil cliffie! Mwahhahahaha! Sorry about that, I know you all hate cliffies, but I could think of a better way for this chapter to end. Yeah I know, out of one situation and into another, but that's the way Rose thinks of it. Please review! Thank you for reading and your previous reviews!

Next Time: Circus Chronicles: Operation BREAKOUT

Chapter 23: Circus Chronicles: Operation BREAKOUT

Shiloh's POV...

Okay, this ice thing sucks!

It's soooooo hard to even freeze something, why can't I freeze the stupid lock?

"Hey Blue, I hate to repeat m'self, but will you hurry up?" Retta's teeth flashed impatiently, the sun's already gone down even.

I concentrated, hard, until my head was pounding, then I was somewhere else entirely

Suddenly I was standing in a snowfield and I saw a figure much taller than I am. The man just stood there, so I yelled out.

"Help me, I can't do it by myself!" Then in a flash we were standing next to each other, I grasped his hand, the man stiffened slightly and I suddenly felt power flow through me.

Suddenly I was back here, Retta complaining and Harry rolling his eyes. Did that all just happen in my mind?

The lock started to get this blue coating of ice around it. Then Retta smacked her grey claws into it, smashing it.

We had released the boy we saw earlier, the one with orange eyes...

Nathaniel's POV...

It's those kids again, but the girl has claws, like a bear. And the other kid, has blue hair now.

There's a new boy with them, her has black hair. They're, they're opening the cages?

My cage was the first to open, I stared at them.

"Next cage guys, we got some mayhem to make an' not a lotta time." Said the white-haired girl snarlishly, with my enhanced vision I could see her red eyes. I could smell an underlying bloodlust emanating from her being, I could see her sharp nail/claws twitch in anticipation.

Her facial expression was bored, but her eyes betrayed her excitement.

"Thanks." I thanked them naturally, they told me about their plan to free all the prisoners and to escape during the chaos. Of course I was all for it, I'm going to get back at that damn Ringmaster for making me and Adolfo suffer because of what we were.

Yeah, revenge is totally in order.

But I had to find Adolfo first, I followed the munchkins, inwardly I snorted humorously.

We went around opening each and every cage, anyone who stayed and didn't flee at the first sight of freedom, looked at us expectantly.

"Well Harry," Retta said gesturing to menagerie of creatures, both natural and unnatural, standing in front of us, "what now?"

"Um," Harry scratched the back of his head with an embarrassed look, "I kinda didn't think that far ahead."

Shiloh smacked his forehead, Retta's reaction was slightly more violent, she whacked the back of Harry's head and snarled while baring her quickly sharpening canines.

"You idiot! You drag us here without a plan? What the damn (censored) (censored) damnit, son of a (censored) what the (censored) (censored) is (censored) damn wrong with your (censored) (censored) (censored) empty (censored) (censored) shell of a (censored) (censored) (censored) poor excuse of a (censored) that you (censored) call a (censored) (censored) (censored) (censored) (censored) brain! You (censored) (censored) (censored) imbecile! How the (censored) (censored) could you not (censored) have a (censored) plan damnit! What the damn (censored) (censored) goes on in that (censored) vacant space you call a head,

(censored) damnit?" Retta ranted in a loud voice as she kicked one of the opened cages, all in one breath.

Everyone did one thing, they stared.

Holy crap, I didn't even know that you could fit so many expletives into that one breath, much less it was a five year old who did it. Heck I could see some of my fellow prisoners blushing like schoolgirls.

"Fribble!" Shiloh sang randomly while putting on a happy grin. That had broken the silence and everyone present was staring at him instead, thinking, 'WTF?'

Okay this has got to be the weirdest rescue ever, well it's the only rescue ever so I'm not about to complain.

Once Retta had calmed down, we all formed a plan, to trash the place then go after the Ringmaster and get some long-overdue revenge. Some of the creatures who weren't here were the heavy-lockdown Force. They were completely loyal to the Ringmaster, and we would have to face them.

I had already transformed into a large wolf, I stood on my hind legs, my shaggy black fur bristling making me appear larger and more intimidating. Adolfo taught me that among tracking and hunting tips, some days I wondered how he knew so much, turns out he was taking info about regular wolves from books he had once read.

"Okay everyone has their assignments," Harry punched his clenched fist into the air, "let's make some mayhem!"

So from there all hell broke loose.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

3rd Person POV...

For once Freedom actually thanked Crytex for its harsh (albeit inhumanly cruel) training. Had she possessed anything less than her harshly honed instinctual reflexes, that bullet would have hit something vital thus ending her insignificant existence.

In a fraction of a second, instead of being shot through the head, it hit her torso, driving into one of her ribs then her into her right lung.

Freedom had retaliated, aiming for his left knee, and to her surprise and aggravation the bullet bounced off of what seemed like an invisible shield.

'Fuck!' Freedom swore angrily as she dashed around the menacing man, then he whistled, the door flew open, and there stood the ugliest crimes against living nature she had ever seen.

Their mismatched parts, hastily grafted together like Frankenstein meets the Saw movies and Jeepers Creepers. It was freaking disturbing. Their mouths hung open, drooling and snarling in menacing manners.

She aimed for their heads, but when one fell three came in its place, filling the office. Then she realized that the Ringmaster had gotten away, with the USB drive.

Her ears could also pick up the sounds of fighting, snarling and screaming outside. It sounded like chaos outside, she shot at vitals then she ran out of bullets. She backed up against the office wall, shit she knew, she was doomed.

Then the unexpected happened, the wall flipped, like in those Scooby Doo episodes when the wall would flip around and put you outside or in another hallway.

Freedom breathed a sigh of relief, only to for her expression to go blank and emotionless again. The sight before her was one of utter chaos. Mutated creatures vs. more creatures, some of the creatures looked like they had been straight from fairy tales and mythology.

But the one thing that entered her mind was, this situation had the kids' names written all over it.

She grasped a broken metal pole for a makeshift weapon, returned her handguns to their respective holsters and charged forward.

'They are sooooo grounded when this is over.' Freedom thought venomously as she smashed the pole into a jackal-hyena-crocodile hybrid.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Nathaniel's POV...

I don't think amount of mental preparation could've prepared me for this, attackers leaping on top of me and sinking their teeth into my fur only to be thrown off. I know that I'm smaller than most werewolves but honestly, this was ridiculous!

I saw Shiloh freezing his enemies' legs in blocks of ice, weighing them down and rendering them immobile. Retta stuck close to Shiloh and Harry, she proved to be a pretty brutal five year old, even the sight of blood didn't seem to disturb her, she just slashed her bear-like claws at the eyes of her enemies. Her aim was off though and she seemed to fight solely on her adrenaline rush, she went for the eyes commonly.

I could only toss my attackers away only to have them recover and charge once again, I strained my keen eyes to find Adolfo's face among the chaos, to my relief and dismay he was nowhere to be seen. Maybe he escaped?

Soon the three fighting munchkins and I were forced to retreat, to the big top.

Damn.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

3rd Person POV...

A bruised and bloodied Freedom smashed, punched, kicked and screamed her way through the seemingly endless horde of creatures brainwashed to kill. She had been forced back beneath the big top, yes she had resorted to using her sonic scream. But it made her throat hurt after using it to repel her attackers.

'Well this sucks,' she thought bitterly as she smashed another reptilian-mammal crossbreed skull with the jagged end of the pole, 'no ammo, stuck using a pole for a weapon, no help, I'm dead.' Then she backed into someone, her instincts screamed she whipped around and smashed the metal pole at her adversary.

He turned out to be a tall man in a half-shredded tux. He spoke with a heavy Italian accent turns out they were on the same side, getting out of that hellhole.

They had also backed into the retreating kids, Freedom looked back to see Shiloh, Harry and Retta all present and accounted for fighting for their lives along with her, all back to back.

Soon the creatures stopped pouring in, and all was still for the moment.

"Freedom!" Shiloh tackle-hugged her joyfully.

"So this is the Freedom you said we'd see?" A taller boy, about ten, spoke while his black wolf ears twitched nervously. He had a black, fluffy tail and his fingernails were longer like claws, the same went for his toenails. His orange eyes glinted in an almost feral light as he flexed his bloodied fingers.

"You guys are in so much trouble, I told you to stay in the car but you didn't listen. Don't you know how to follow instructions?" Freedom reprimanded the three children in her monotone voice.

"Sorry but we got worried." Harry explained weakly, using his electric powers made him very, very tired.

"That's no excuse." Freedom retorted, sending a cold glare at the three.

There were short introductions, Adolfo tugged and scratched at his curse collar. Everything was silent, the rest of the freed prisoners were either dead, or they had fled to their newfound freedom.

All was silent beneath the big top.

"Why do I get the feeling that we haven't seen the worst of it yet?" Retta said.

Then a clinking sound disrupted the silence as the dimly lit circus tent suddenly went black as pitch.

"Because my dear," the voice from the elevated platform caused everyone to jump in surprise, the cruelty dripped off of every spoken word, the voice sent chills down Adolfo's and Nathaniel's spines. The spot light lit up the dark circus tent, the Ringmaster smiled cruelly, like he does just before he twists his prisoners into horrible freaks of nature.

Then the group heard howling and snarling, and the lights snapped on nearly blinding them. There they stood, in the center of the ring, the clinking noise had been the exits, sealed by bars of Iron Silver. They were trapped, there was no way out.

"The show is about to begin." And with that the Ringmaster snapped his fingers.

To be continued...

A/N: Cliffie! Up next, the thrilling and heart wrenching conclusion of the Circus Chronicles! Stay tuned! Who will win? Team Harry or the cruel Ringmaster? Find out in the next installment of the "Maelstrom Twins"! REVIEW PLZ!

Next Time: Circus Chronicles: Tears Beneath the Big Top

Chapter 24: Circus Chronicles: Tears Beneath the Big Top

Nathaniel's POV...

We're trapped, trapped like rabbits and we're surrounded by some of the toughest mutated monsters to ever live in this circus.

We are so screwed it isn't even funny.

The woman Freedom, the three kids had spoken about her briefly, but they thought highly of her. Her medium length brown hair was held up in a ponytail, her clothes were bloodied and she brandished that metal pole like an expert. But what really caught my attention were her eyes, they're blue, and icy blue that looked almost, empty, but they were the eyes that had all but given up.

I brandished my sharp claw-like fingernails at our circling enemies. I looked at Adolfo worriedly, he looked even more haggard than usual, I stared at the dark, twisted version clowns with silver spiked whips smile menacingly.

"Non abbiate paura il mio piccolo." Adolfo whispered and thanks to my heightened senses I could hear him. His words gave me comfort, though I don't really know enough Italian to understand what he had just said.

Then the attackers leapt at us and Harry blasted a wild wave of what looked like electricity, Shiloh froze the ground with mini-blasts of cold energy from his hands, and Retta was jumping and swiping her claws fiercely along with Adolfo and I, Freedom smacked the pole into heads thoroughly knocking them out or killing them. But soon we were driven into a tight back to back circle, barely fending off our attackers as they pounced at us, coming away, weakening us, tiring us out.

It's only a matter of time before we are exhausted, and then that leaves the matter of the final blow or worse.

We backed up against each other in an even tighter circle, well this is it, my final hour.

I always thought I'd go out with more a bang you know?

But I suppose even last requests don't exist within this world-

Swish!

"CREEAAARRRR!" Then like an angel from above there was a beautiful bird, almost three feet tall, with a beautiful white plumage with a bluish tinge. I recognized her from the shows, she was the Ice Bird, her bluish-white talons raking into our foes following behind her was an rugged German Shepherd dog growling and snapping his teeth alongside a tiger-sized black cat with one white paw.

They plowed through the surrounding attackers and backed us up, somehow, I could hardly believe any of it. We all fought, and grew tired quickly, then came a shout.

"Outta the way, now!" It was Retta's voice as she leapt to one side, we all did the same and a fireball flew past us and charred the dead bodies of our enemies. But I didn't, couldn't smell burning flesh, so that means-

It was then that I realized, I've figured it out!

"Guys the monsters!" I was cut off by a burning pain in my lower back, it was a whip covered in small silver spikes, I screamed and the burning sensation of metal digging into my lower back melted into a white-hot agony.

"Morte a voi, Dio-abbandonato figlio di puttana!" Screamed Adolfo as he lunged at the man and he began to use punch, kick and tackle, he had taken the whip and was using it to strangle the man into unconsciousness.

"They're all illusions!" I gasped out once I recovered, though I was still seeing white spots dancing before my eyes. "They're not real!"

Suddenly we all stopped fighting as the monsters faded from sight, and I could see the Ringmaster, he was clapping slowly.

"Well done young Nathaniel, it seems that you can learn after all." He gave a smile revealing his disgusting yellowed teeth.

"He's been toying with us the whole time." Spat Harry angrily, but he couldn't do much, he looked like he was about to collapse.

"Ah," The Ringmaster smirked knowingly, "young wizards, so powerful for your age, what a waste" he flicked his hand and a blue fireball began to form, "too bad I have to kill you, I do so love such spirited fighters such as yourselves."

"What are you after?" Shiloh shouted suddenly, his blue hair falling once more over his eyes.

"Nothing," then as sadistic grin graced the Ringmaster's features, "I just enjoy it so." Then he tossed the blue ball of fire towards us, it was heading in Harry's direction, Harry leapt to one side, the fireball missing him narrowly.

Soon we were all separated; fireballs coming from all direction, and in the chaos, the Ringmaster had once again disappeared from sight.

I dodged yet another flaming ball of death only to get clipped in the side by another, I staggered, this hurt even worse than having the Ring of Fire fall on top of me.

"Nathaniel look out!" Who's voice it was, I wouldn't know, the blood dripping down my back and the burn on my side they hurt too much...

I turned my hazy vision to see the Ringmaster, gun in hand, smiling triumphantly.

Everything seemed to go in slow motion after that, I vaguely recognized the gun, the one that fired silver bullets. He remembered another older Lycan, he had disobeyed one too many times and was shot several times, he screamed in agony for hours before finally dying.

The incident gives me nightmares still.

BANG!

I barely blinked, then felt something ram into my side sending me careening into the adjacent wall of the stands.

I heard a sharp cry of pain, and the Ringmaster snarled angrily.

"You've interfered with my plans one too many times Adolfo!" I could only watch blearily as the Ringmaster picked up my Father-figure by the curse collar digging into the skin of his neck. "I was kind before, I let you live instead of killing you, but now I know that was a mistake on my part! Well," the Ringmaster paused then threw Adolfo to the ground and flicked his hand causing Adolfo to scream as his curse collar activated, forcing him to transform.

I felt my fingers twitch, I turned my head, I could see Shiloh, Retta, Harry and Freedom too far away while dodging a ton of fireballs, too far away to help.

I tried to get up, but it proved an impossibility due to my quickly fading consciousness.

I clutched the burn on my side, and scrambled forward. I turned back to see Adolfo snarling angrily as the curse collar pulsed with a deep red aura, the Ringmaster's eyes glowed with the same color. Then I realized, Adolfo was fighting!

For the first time that I've ever seen, Adolfo was fighting the curse collar! I inwardly cheered, I was on my knees now, almost standing, my breathing was heavy and uneven, but that is the least of my concerns.

Then I saw everyone else, they were far away from me, exhausted, vulnerable.

'Is this how I'm gonna die?' I thought solemnly.

"See Adolfo?" The Ringmaster said as he smiled evilly, "no matter what you do, no matter how hard you fight, you always lose." Then Adolfo (in Lycan form) collapsed to his knees as his body was forced to do the Ringmaster's bidding.

Adolfo snarled, he looked almost forlornly at me as the Ringmaster crushed his freewill into oblivion, leaving his body nothing but a mindless puppet beneath his cruel control.

Then the Ringmaster turned his gaze to our exhausted party and smiled. I don't think I've ever truly hated someone or something until now. I hate the Ringmaster, I hate that I can't do anything!

I hate that I'm weak, that I can't help the only person who helped me! It's not fair, it's not-!

Then I noticed my blurring vision, I'm, crying?

"Tears are sign of weakness, showing what you all truly are weak, worthless, pathetic." The Ringmaster gloated as magical flames surrounded us, Adolfo curled his lips as if he was agreeing. I couldn't believe it, he had been reduced to a puppet, a mindless puppet.

Suddenly, a white light erupted from our direction and hurtled toward the Ringmaster only to be cancelled out by a wall of flame.

"Accidental magic?" The Ringmaster sneered, "it'll take much more than that to save you now." Then he turned and snapped his fingers, "Adolfo, finish them."

And with two bounding steps, Adolfo's maw glinted in the firelight near our faces, Freedom smashed the pole into the side of his head knocked him off target, narrowly missing us.

I lifted my claws to strike at his eyes, but I, I can't do it.

"Adolfo?" He snarled at me menacingly. I'm going to go out on a limb here but, "Dad?"

"Hah, you think he can actually hear you?" The Ringmaster called from the other side of the flame walls, "kill him."

Adolfo hesitated.

"Kill him you mangy waste of space!"

That tore it, Adolfo turned around and lunged at the Ringmaster and though the Ringmaster doesn't look it he was strong enough to wrestle with Adolfo. The flames parted as the Ringmaster's concentration was broken.

I could see where Harry, Shiloh, Retta and Freedom they ran towards us.

"Flash out with the bird!" Adolfo cried out, everything within the Circus is rigged to blow!"

"What?" Retta yelled.

"Now get out of here!" Adolfo said, I could feel the flames getting closer, and then I noticed that the flames had climbed up the supporting poles and the big top had caught fire as well.

Freedom had grabbed my hand, and I struggled to get to Adolfo, but I was held back.

Then I felt something appear in my pocket, it was a deck, a scopa deck. Adolfo's scopa deck.

He snapped his teeth and lunged while swiping his claws and catching the Ringmaster's shoulder. While the Ringmaster retaliated by throwing fireballs once again.

I was dragged to the group. And I watch as the big top began to collapse around us all, and as a flash of white snow exploded around my vision, everything seemed to freeze and I saw Adolfo, with a single tear crawling down his Lycan cheek.

Then the white dominated my vision and we all landed in the parking lot with a variety of oofs and groans of pain.

I looked toward the burning circus, but it was as if everything was muted for a brief two seconds, then-

BANG!

An explosion, the initial explosion sent a blast of heat in all directions, followed by more explosions as the explosives went off, sealing the fate of whoever was caught within the vicinity.

I felt two hands grip both of mine it was Shiloh and Retta. Harry reached for my shoulder though I was taller then all three. Their faces were tearing up, like mine.

"Sorry, we should've-" Harry began, but I cut him off.

"No it's not any of your faults." I looked towards the sight of the burning site, "if anything I thank you guys."

We all wandered up to the lone car in the lot and Freedom opened it, yet I couldn't tear my eyes from the sight before me. As if Adolfo would come walking out of the flames unscathed, to join me in freedom.

I didn't even notice the tiger-sized cat shrink to the size of a house cat. I gripped the scopa deck in my grubby, now completely human hands like a lifeline.

I stared at the flames once again. Praying for something, anything, a miracle even.

But I guess, life isn't like that, sometimes, there aren't any miracles when you want them cushion the hard blow of reality.

When you lose something, or someone important, I always expected that it would feel like a hole opening up beneath me, but all I could feel was a growing empty space in my chest. Like I had when I witnessed my parents' deaths.

I hadn't even noticed that everyone, though they were strangers to me, Harry, Retta, Shiloh, Freedom, even the German Shepherd, the cat, and the Ice bird, they all stood next to me looking at the flames.

Then I fell to my knees and, for the first time since my parents' deaths, I broke down, but I couldn't cry.

And yet, as we drove away, I looked back at the smoldering flames, I could all but hear something, something in the distance.

Something almost like a fading whisper.

"Addio figlio mio, mi spiace, non dare, buona fortuna. Farewell my son, I love you."

I looked around, the three exhausted children were fast asleep. They had mourned with me, though they hardly knew him, yet they were just as sad as I.

And a song played on the radio in the background...

I tried to go on like I never knew you
I'm awake but my world is half asleep
I pray for this heart to be unbroken
But without you all I'm going to be is incomplete

Incomplete

And it was then that I let go of the tears I had been holding back, it was then that I let myself cry.

For the Father I lost.

A/N: Oh gosh, I cried while writing this! I just cried! I tried to make his death powerful and meaningful, how did I do? I'm sorry, but I had to write this part eventually. (Blows nose) But that wraps up the Circus Chronicles, and the gang won't get any bigger! I've finally introduced all my characters! (For now, who knows...) Yes I know its soooo, sad. The song is "Incomplete" by the Backstreet Boys. And before you all kill me for this chapter, think about it. Even though Nathaniel isn't his son by blood, he still makes the ultimate sacrifice for whom he considers as his own child, now that's what I call love.

Ice Phoenix:

-No name as of yet (you can vote on that!)

-she is female!

-Her feathers are white with a slightly bluish tinge, her tail feathers have maya blue edges

-Her talons are white with gray-blue lines

-Her tears do not heal, they're acidic (AKA: POISON)

-She is Shiloh's familiar

-Fawkes is a FIRE Phoenix, he can Flame Out (AKA: fire teleportation); she can Snow Out (complete with a flash of snow and snowflakes)

-Her beak is a silver-white color, the "lips" plus the beak tip is a shade of maya blue

-Her eyes are Cerulean Blue

-She is two feet and seven inches tall

-Her wingspan is 10.2 feet (3.1 meters)

-Her flight feathers also have Maya blue edges

-All her feathers are white, but their edges have varying shades of whitish blue

-She has more of a Falcon look than Fawkes has

German Shepherd

-His name is already decided

-He is male

-He is going to be Retta's familiar

-He's a normal (mostly) dog

-He does not talk

-He has no elemental ability (so don't ask)

Cat

-Black fur with one white paw

-She is female

-Has the ability to be either the size of a house cat or tiger-sized (nothing inbetween!)

-She is going to one of Harry's familiars

-She is most certainly NOT a Nundu!

-You can vote and or suggest a name for her as well

A/N(Part 2): Okay that's it folks! Please review and tune in next time for the Maelstrom Twins! Please don't kill me! Here are the translations! REVIEW! Happy Birthday to me!

Translation/s:

Non abbiate paura il mio piccolo = Don't be afraid my little one

Morte a voi, Dio-abbandonato figlio di puttana! = Death to you, you god-forsaken son of a bitch!

Addio figlio mio, mi spiace, non dare, buona fortuna = Farewell my son, I'm sorry, don't give up, good luck

Maelstrom Twins

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

A/N: Okay here's another chap! Please enjoy! Read and REVIEW!
=)

NOTE CONCERNING RETTA'S EYE COLOR: You may wonder why Retta's eyes were grey in the beginning, they were but notice that usually when you are half-blind (or completely blind), she has albinism (white hair, duh!) not completely albino, but almost there. She barely has sight in the beginning, let's just say that her vision was worse than her Father's and Harry's put together. I looked it up, her previously terrible vision is/was a genetic defect, the grey was actually a type of film that covered her eyes (if anyone knows the name of it please tell me), when she was mutated the (experimental)serum messed with her DNA, naturally I assume that I previously mentioned that her near-blindness is genetic defect, therefore the serum corrected her vision, though it comes with several other more pressing hang-ups. But you guys will find out about that stuff later, her original eye color if she didn't have albinism, would be green (like Harry's and their Mother's), which is now.

EYE COLOR CHART:

Beast Form = Red Irises w/ pupils that alternate between cat-like slits to reptile eye-slits depending on her aggression level

Human Form = Before mutation: Grey w/ hint of green, After Mutation: Emerald Green w/ a single, solitary fleck of hazel in the corner of her left eye

Human/Beast Cross(will be explained eventually) = Same as beast form, depending on her current aggression level

NOTE ABOUT THE LAST CHAPTER:

Okay, there was fighting in the last chapter, let me clarify something, the Kids (Harry, Retta and Shiloh) did NOT KILL ANYTHING OR ANYBODY! Half the battle (everything until they were driven beneath the Big Top) was real, but during the part when the Ringmaster showed up and threw fireballs, those enemies were

illusions created by the Ringmaster's magic. During the entire fight though the only one who actually got their hands dirtier than the other two was Retta, who preferred to slash at her opponents eyes.

Harry used small mini-discharges of electricity that messed with his opponents movements(AKA Their nervous system), also causing a minimal amount of pain

Shiloh froze their feet/paws/etcetera to the ground while they ran, causing them to fall, letting Shiloh dodge around them

NOTE/S ABOUT NATHANIEL

-He is a Werewolf (there is a difference in this story, between Werewolves and Lycans, it will be explained at a later date)

-He has sunset orange eyes

-He's 5 yrs. older than Shiloh, Harry, and Retta, currently he's 10 yrs. old

-His Full Werewolf form looks like a large black wolf, his paws are spread out slightly more, sort of like fingers, but still paw-like complete with sharp black claws. He can stand on his back legs, but he prefers to stand on all fours.

-His Full Werewolf form does not have a bunch of bulky muscles and it never will! He is not and will not be, the Hulk! He has a skinny build therefore he has lean muscles, and he relies on speed more often

-His partial werewolf form is when he morphs one or several of his Werewolf attributes while maintaining most of his human form

-He can transform at will

-The only time that he has involuntary transformations is on nights with a Half-Moon, NOT the Full-Moon!

-When he starts morphing his claws (both fingers and toes), they look like Inuyasha's (that's the only reference I can think of), this look only applies to his Partial Werewolf Form.

ABOUT THE KIDS' & FREEDOM'S POWERS:

Harry = His element is Electricity, currently he only has enough energy for two sort of powerful lightning bolts, or just one powerful blast that leaves him completely drained. He is capable of several smaller discharges, like static that can temporarily mess with the nervous system or reflexes.

Shiloh = His element is Ice. When he uses his powers, it's called "Ice Mode", his hair will turn Brandeis blue and his irises will be at least two shades of blue lighter than his hair. So far he is only capable of freezing smaller objects (like his opponents feet). He can also make golf ball sized ice marbles at will, though it takes both energy and concentration.

Harrietta = Her Element is a mystery. So far she's starting to prefer mauling her opponents in her Partial Beast Form. Her element will be sort of introduced later, guess what the element is! There was only one clue and that was in one of the previous chapters! Kudos to whoever gets it right!

Nathaniel = No Element. He won't have one, so don't ask/guess! Basic Werewolf spiel, slightly enhanced senses and some quirks that I'm sure you'll all find hilarious!

Freedom = She has no element, and as you saw earlier, she has a sonic scream, it doesn't kill, but she's hardly uses it. She prefers to use firearms (AKA: Guns), her real area of expertise.

Chapter 25: Travel Chronicles: Connect the Stars

The ride to the nearest town was both quiet and exhausting. Freedom had only stopped to remove the bullet embedded somewhere near her lung. She had gone outside the car, even the sobbing Nathaniel had fallen asleep.

She flicked out the small Swiss Army knife; which she had bought at a camping store; and brought it to the light of a small lighter, heating the knife, sterilizing it.

She took a look at the bloody hole that lay between just below her ribs on her right side, damn she didn't know whether to think that

she was lucky that the bullet had missed her lung, or to think that pain was a bitch that deserved to be shot in the head.

'Crap.' She hissed inwardly as the pain pulsed through her again, she hated days like these. What turned out to be a simple trip to the circus had turned out to be another battle laying in the wait. Seriously, did danger and excitement have to follow her, everywhere?

It was severely annoying in so many ways, they always seem to have ways to almost kill her. Then she realized that she never got the USB back and that it must've melted in the destruction of the Centurian Wonder Circus.

"Well that's just-" she flinched, she really needed to take care of that wound now. Even the injury on her arm she had gotten, barely a week or so ago, was starting to bug her.

She was used to lots of pain, exhaustion, hell even all the stress. But no matter how much you're conditioned, she had to get that bullet out before the wound got infected.

"Hello?" A groggy voice startled the crap out of her, causing her to draw a thankfully empty gun to aim right between the eyes of one Nathaniel Scott Comhnall. He froze, the look in Freedom's eyes, they were cold, empty, all business...

Then her shoulders sagged as she relaxed rather awkwardly, then heaved another painful breath through her lungs.

"Don't," She wheezed as evenly as she could, "do that."

"S'rry." The boy muttered apologetically and his keen eyes noticed the red staining her shirt. "Are you bleedin'?" He gasped as he looked at her.

Freedom shot a glare towards the ten year old and frowned sarcastically. "Nooooo, the red on my shirt is just food coloring that got on my- Of course I'm bleeding you child-sized dimwit!" As to how she managed to keep her tone even and almost devoid of emotion (except for a hint of sarcasm) would always remain a mystery.

Nathaniel couldn't help but compare Freedom's personality to some of the people's back at the circus. Cold, almost empty, devoid of emotion, detached, distant, and sometimes cruel...

But the brunette woman in front of him, currently cutting out a bloody bullet from the wound, which by the way was made the child blanch none too discreetly, had just risked life and limb and saved his life.

Even if she hadn't said anything about Adolfo's death. She seemed to be more reserved and disciplined than anyone Nathaniel had ever seen before.

"If you're going to make faces I suggest going back to the car and getting more sleep." There, the bullet was out and the blood flowed more freely, staining the dark orange shirt red.

"Sorry I just," Nathaniel paused for a moment, searching for the right words to say. "I wanted to say thanks."

"For what?" Freedom resisted the urge to laugh bitterly as she spoke, "I didn't do anything."

"But you did!" Nathaniel interrupted loudly as he stood up emphatically, "you came and helped! You brought Shiloh, Retta and Harry! You freed us, me! How can you say that it's nothing?"

Freedom stared at him blankly and finished bandaging her slim middle. Her eyes were really bloodshot and red, and if the dark circles below her eyes were any indication, she looked exhausted.

"Look kid I appreciate the gratitude, but I don't deserve it. Besides, the kids did all the work, I just smashed things with a pole and got used for target practice for both fireballs and bullets. That's all." She said the word all with a tone of finality.

"You should get s'me sleep. Ya know?" Well that was new, Nathaniel's Scottish accent was starting to show through as he was almost overcome with a feeling of sleepiness and yawned.

"I will, but in the meantime, you go get some rest." Then Freedom leaned her head against the tree, looking up at the stars above. Nathaniel stood for a moment, and instead of heading back to the nearby car, he plopped down next to Freedom.

She looked at him oddly, then stared up at the stars again.

"They're pretty." Nathaniel commented quietly.

Freedom stared at them some more. Her eyes shifted to the shadowy figure that was Nathaniel without turning her head. Because other than the stars, all was pitch black.

"You ever watch the stars?" Nathaniel questioned, calmly reclining against the tree trunk Freedom was reclining against.

"Used to." She answered blankly.

"You stopped?"

"Didn't have enough time for it, but..." Her voice trailed off.

"But, what?" Nathaniel pressed curiously.

"I always loved watching the stars, even since I was small. But depressingly," her voice had taken even more of a bitter tone, though for Freedom you really had to pay attention or you wouldn't know about her expressions (or in the most case lack thereof). "Life doesn't give time to watch the stars..."

"What happened?" Nathaniel blurted, "I- I mean, why'd ya stop?"

"In light of recent events that question is considered crass and offensive," Freedom's flat tone vibrated coldly, "but I can make an exception, just this once." She felt a small grin tug at the corner of her mouth.

"I'm sor- Really?" Nathaniel exclaimed.

"Are you deaf?" Her empty tone held a slight hint of sarcasm, which was like a form of humor.

"No..." Nathaniel said, then silence reigned and unconsciously he gripped the tattered box that held the Scopa deck.

"You miss him." It wasn't a question, it was a statement.

"Yeah." The ten year old didn't deny it.

"He sacrificed himself for you, you know." Freedom commented.

"What? But he did it for all of us-" Nathaniel started, only to be calmly interrupted.

"No, he did it for you." Freedom said flatly.

"How would you know?" Snapped Nathaniel angrily.

"Cause," Freedom began, "I'm no expert in emotional expression myself, but I can tell even if he wasn't related to you by blood, he considered you like the son he never had." Freedom stated calmly.

"And you know this because?" Nathaniel raised an eyebrow.

"He said so. I sort of bumped into him when we were all fighting separate. He asked if I'd seen a ten year old with black hair and orange eyes, I assume that fits your description." Freedom added her flat, dry tone of sarcasm to the mix.

"Oh." Nathaniel said, Adolfo had asked for him? Damn, he didn't even get to say goodbye.

"I may have only had a few words with the man," Freedom voice lightened a fraction, "but I could tell, he cared very much for your safety and happiness."

Nathaniel was silent.

Freedom stared up at the stars, connecting them to form pictures. But she found that every year, it got more and more difficult to connect them as easily as she used to. Maybe it was all the shock therapy and searing pain...

"Why?" Nathaniel suddenly spoke.

"Going to have to be more specific." Freedom clicked her tongue.

"Why are you being so nice?" Then to Nathaniel's surprise, Freedom made a kind of hacking noise, like a dry/sore throat coupled with swallowed sawdust.

Freedom was laughing.

She hadn't laughed in so long, her laugh was way underused, probably the reason it sounded so bad. She had to stop though, due to the searing pain in her abdomen.

"Nice?" She wheezed out, "I've been called many things in my life, but never nice! Oh that's rich! Me, nice..." She wheezed out another choked up laughter, only to wince in pain as the bullet wound was aggravated.

"What's so funny about that?" Nathaniel didn't get it.

Truth be told, Freedom had been called many things in her lifetime. But for some reason, hearing someone actually give her a compliment for the first time, well to her face, it just made her crack up. Nuts right?

Shiloh, Harry, and Retta, they thanked her for everything, and sort of brightened her days, but whether it was intentional or otherwise, she hadn't had a compliment of any kind since how many years ago.

"Sorry," Freedom pushed down the urge to break out into a smile as she hacked another breath, "but kid, I am soooo not nice. Hell I've killed more people than I care to think about, hell I've aided people in their psychotic effort to dominate the world, how am I nice?"

"But you are, you rescued us and everything, you're even telling me in your own way that, well to put it bluntly, to get over it and move on." Nathaniel said, twiddling his thumbs in the darkness.

"Hah," Her cold tone had returned, but now it, it held a bit of warmth, like when she talked to the kids, she ruffled Nathaniel's hair, "I think I'm gonna like you kid."

Nathaniel smiled, and for a while they both just sat there staring at the stars.

"You got a story you want to tell?" Freedom broke the silence, it's as if she was reading his mind (no not really though).

"Huh?" Nathaniel answered rather intelligently.

"Okay how about this, you tell me your story, I tell mine. I can tell, you're the kind of person who knows the reality." Freedom intoned.

"What abo-" Nathaniel was then cut off by Freedom's quiet but firm voice.

"They're young," Freedom said, "and as much stuff as they've seen, I think they've got enough on their plates."

Nathaniel made a noise of agreement.

"But, I've got a question," Nathaniel paused, "you don't mind that I'm a werewolf?"

Freedom was silent, and a slow painful dejection started to settle over the boy's heart. Just when he thought there were nice people in this world-

"Not at all kid." Freedom's words were flat and toneless, but it was sincere.

They both shifted from reclining against the uncomfortable tree trunk to lying flat on their backs, looking up at the night sky.

"Thanks."

"For what?" Freedom raised an eyebrow and inwardly snorted, gah, kids were always so emotional...

"Just thanks I guess." Then Nathaniel added, "but, call me Scott."

"Only if you call me Freedom."

So they lay there on the grass, side by side, talking about their lives and harsh realities, yet oddly, it was comforting to meet someone whose' life was as difficult as their own.

Though Freedom would do everything to deny it, she had to admit, she saw some of herself in those kids she picked up. Or maybe it was just them all getting the short end of the stick in life, but, they were in retrospect, just like her... But oddly, despite the pain in her abdomen slowly ebbing away, she felt, at peace...

The stars glistened above the earth over their heads, and for once two people with tumultuous lives were at peace.

And as they lay there, for once Nathaniel, or Scott, as he likes to be called, thought that maybe he wasn't as alone as he thought he'd be.

And he began to wonder if Freedom was thinking the same thing...

'Oh, well', he thought with a soft grin as his eyes began to droop, 'it's almost like... Having a Mum again...' Then Nathaniel Scott Comhnall slipped off into the first peaceful slumber he'd ever had since his birth parents died...

A/N: Yeah, I know, fluffy family bit. Sorry, I just needed something fluffy to brighten my mood. Writing is my therapy you know? I'm writing this at 11 PM, before I have to go to school on Monday. Yes, Nathaniel prefers to be addressed by his middle name, mostly because it's easy to say and has less syllables. Yes Nathaniel has a Scottish accent, but it's not very heavy, he actually speaks with a cross between an American accent and a British accent, he doesn't like using his Scottish accent much due to some people misunderstanding him occasionally. Yes he is Scottish, it's not irrelevant, it's part of the plot, so please bear with me. I can't use the computer on Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays, so don't expect updates on those, unless I can somehow convince my Mom to let me use the computer... Anyways, I just have to ask, what do you all think? How do I write fluffy family stuff? Good? Bad? Needs tweaking? Please tell me, it's like the only thing that tides me over until Wednesday. Thank you for listening to me rant and blabber, don't forget to review!

REVIEW! PLZZZZZZZZZZ! =)

Peace Out! ;D (does moonwalk on the ceiling)

Chapter 26: Travel Chronicles: What's in A Name?

The next morning, Freedom realized that she had actually achieved sleep (even if it had only been one hour), without even knowing it. It felt nice to sleep, but she was still exhausted as ever. But eventually, she was able to drag herself into the drivers' seat.

The kids could tell that the young woman was exhausted, be it by the well-defined dark circles below her eyes or the tired slump of her still tense shoulders...

"Are you-" Shiloh started.

"Jus' fine." Freedom snapped irritably. Okay, the lack of sleep is really starting to get to her, she may be conditioned to function with as little sleep as humanly possible, but this was getting ridiculous.

Plus her paranoia instinct was going insane right now, she was always looking out of the corner of her eyes and behind her, wondering if 802 was still tailing them...

Damn stupid paranoia...

She needed coffee, so far the kids were awake and getting antsy to stretch their legs. Then they begged her to visit the library, they bugged her, and bugged her, and bugged her, and bugged her, until-

"Fine." Her tired voice radiated exhaustion, "we'll go to the library..."

"Cool!" Shiloh yelled.

Then Lady Fate decided to be a bitch and Freedom's head slumped over the wheel, fast asleep.

They swerved, three kids screamed as the car hurtled towards the edge of the bridge, with a river below.

Scott, who was seated in the front passengers' seat right next to Freedom, grabbed the wheel and pulled it hard right. He flinched as searing pain flared to life in his back, the burns and silver spike marks of the Ringmaster's whips were livid beneath his shirt and bandages that Freedom had given him.

The tires screeched.

Shiloh, Retta and Harry were silent as the edge came closer at an alarming rate.

The animals huddled together.

The bird was strangely calm.

Retta had slipped from Shiloh and her brother's deathgrip and dove forward hand outstretched.

She missed and fell into Scott, causing him to let the wheel go.

'Oh (censored).' Was the one thought that permeated through the young girl's mind as she was unable to rip her eyes from their impending death-

SCRREEEEEEEEESHHHH!

Freedom woken up, and slammed the brakes and the car turned sharply, two inches from the edge, the car was tilting, tottering over the edge...

Tottering between life and death.

Freedom threw her weight onto the ungrounded side, and the wheels thumped loudly as the touched ground.

Then everyone let out the breathes they'd been holding, and their hearts started beating once more.

The next few hours were spent driving in silence.

They never did visit that library.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

The kids were worried, Freedom was even quieter than before, they only stopped to eat, take potty breaks, and in Freedom's case drink more coffee.

Her movements were more mechanical, her face and eyes expressionless. She didn't even answer when the children asked her questions and comments.

Scott stayed awake looking out the window excitedly, if he had a tail it would've been wagging.

Shiloh looked at the animals with a jubilant smile, as if they hadn't faced a near-death experience.

"We gotta name em'!" He turned to the bird perching on his knee. "I think, um..." His face shown a bit of confusion.

"How's about Aisu?" Scott said, Shiloh looked at him strangely.

"What's that mean?" The overly jubilant boy questioned the ten year old.

"Well, back at, um you know the place," Scott stumbled over the words, as memories of the hellhole he'd spent his early childhood in, the loss of his Father-figure still weighed heavy within his chest... "There was a Japanese Lycan who, well, she was very nice, anyway, she taught me some Japanese. Aisu is the Japanese word for snow."

"I love it!" Shiloh chirped, he stoked the newly dubbed Aisu's crest lovingly, she trilled out a series of off-tune notes in contentment as she nuzzled the young ice wielder's hand.

Harry conferred with Retta and Valerius. The feline curled in his lap purred contentedly as he smoothed out her fur gently.

Valerius spat out a hissed insult.

Then the cat hissed with her ears back, and leapt onto Harry's shoulder and hissed threateningly, as she knocked the Flame Viper off his master's shoulders. Naturally, Valerius wouldn't let this insult go unpunished, so he slithered up and snapped at the feline's heels.

Things would've escalated to worse things if Harry hadn't pulled them apart.

"Stop it you two!" Harry looked at the two animals reprimandingly. They at least had the decency to look ashamed of their behavior. "I would love it if you guys stay, but if you can't get along then one of you has to go, I don't wanna choose between the two of ya so don't f'rce me to!"

"I think she's a rebel, a bit of a rogue." Snickered Shiloh as he hid his mouth beneath his hands in attempt to muffle the snicker.

"That's it!" Harry exclaimed, "what d'ya think 'bout the name Rogue?"

She mewed an agreement.

"Pfft..." Retta scoffed, with the German Shepherd that lay on the floor, calmly snoozing the day away.

"Oh yeah? Aren't you gonna name the dog, Harrietta?" Harry knew that his sister despised her first name, Shiloh snickered.

"Okay that's it!" Retta said angrily, "I'm changin' mah name! I'm so sick of that damn name I could scream!" She ranted on about how their parents could've come up with a better name than the one they "cursed" her with.

"You want another name?" Scott said raising an eyebrow.

"Duh, stupid!" Retta said, crossing her arms. "From this day forth I shall be known as Helena Noelle Potter!"

Then she pointed dramatically at the German Shepherd curled up on the floor, "And you shall be known as, hm what should I call you?"

At that everyone anime fell.

"How about Hunter?" Harry suggested.

"Too common." The newly dubbed Helena waved her brother's suggestion off non-committally.

"What's a hunter?" Shiloh questioned innocently.

"You're kidding right?" Scott raised an eyebrow questioningly, I mean come on what kid didn't know about this stuff, it was just common kid stuff.

"No he's not." Freedom spoke for the first time in several hours. "Considering that he might as well have been raised under a rock where he grew up, no offense kid."

"Not tak'n." Shiloh chirped happily as he looked out the window at a pasture of cows. "MOO!"

Freedom's eyebrow twitched as the kids debated on what to name the German Shepherd, it wasn't that they were annoying her, as the fact the the harshness of the dying sunlight and the sound of the kids' voices were giving her a major headache.

She needed serious R&R like ASAP.

'I've gotta put some distance between us and that giant beacon that might as well have said, 'hey psycho snipers of Crytex, something funky's going down over here, please come over and capture us, experiment on us and kill us slowly.' What screwy luck...' She thought while taking a right turn down an exit towards a rest stop to find some dinner...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

They stayed in a small hotel that night, the room was small with two beds and a small couch.

The kids were out like the lights, Freedom sighed quietly. She was taking micronaps, this wasn't good, it was probably the only reason she wasn't dead from lack of oxygen to her brain right now...

At least that's what she had hypothesized anyways...

But after meeting Harry and Re- Helena, with their talk of magic and a world of magical people with the same ability, if I wasn't a former Crytex employee, it would've blown my mind.

But I've seen children turned into mutated crimes against nature, I've seen many forms of death, torture and killing, more monsters, and

horrors that this world has to offer. Believing in the existence of magic was almost, laughable.

Some laugh.

Against her own better judgment, and whatever was left of her sanity, she turned towards the slumbering animals they had smuggled into the room.

The German shepherd, eventually about ten minutes before they had gotten to the motel, the kids had been stumped. So Freedom suggested the name Garren, which meant guardian in German.

For a dog, he held himself gracefully and had a very easy-going nature from what she had seen so far. He looked up at her intelligently as Freedom was about to leave.

"Garren," she said quietly, the canine's ears flicked forward in complete attention, "protect them 'til I get back."

And with that she left, closing the door behind her.

Garren had gotten up, padded up to the door, and sat down with an almost inaudible 'plop.'

He had a job to do, these two-legs had saved him, he had to protect the pups. Despite their larger size, their smell gave away the fact that they were still pups.

Adults are supposed to protect pups.

The female with cold eyes is Alpha.

Those eyes were the eyes of one who made difficult decisions, decisions that end in either life or death.

Alpha had given him a command, he was bound to follow them. Alpha had graced him with a name, Garren, a strange, alien name to him. But it held meaning to Alpha, she had said, guardian.

He was a guardian.

'Thank you Alpha.' And he fought off sleep, standing guard at that door, he would fulfill his purpose given to him.

Because life without purpose is meaningless, and to a dog, meaninglessness is a hell...

Back in the Bad Place, Garren knew that hell all too well...

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Freedom was restocking, basic foods, a couple of lighters, and some other stuff, and some clothes for the werewolf kid.

After that she just walked around, not even looking at the shop windows as she tried to get herself to calm down.

Then a loud noise assaulted her eardrums.

"Come on! I swear that there was a flying toilet askin' ya to dance!" Yelled a loud voice from inside the restaurant Freedom was standing in front of.

Freedom shifted her gaze only to be greeted by the sight of a young man in his early twenties, just before he barreled right into her.

"Sorry lady!" He exclaimed hastily as he jumped up and yanked her back onto her feet.

She studied his face, high cheek bones, strong jaw (not too pronounced), chocolaty brown hair with misty green eyes.

He would've been considered by any passerby, if not for the burn scars that marred his face. Starting just below his jaw, one burn scar ran down his neck and disappeared below his jacket, another scar led a jagged path across his left cheek and twisted across the bridge of his nose beneath his right eye the disappeared into his hair. On the right corner of his mouth was a smaller, but more prominent burn then extended all the way from the corner of his mouth to the skin of his right ear.

But it wasn't his looks that caught Freedom's attention.

Where had she heard that voice before-? Freedom wondered as the young man dashed away at a full sprint with the restaurant employees hot on his heels...

Then she remembered...

Flashback!

"OMG a giant cupcake!"

End Flashback...

'It's that guy from before,' Freedom thought quickly, 'the guy who almost got us all killed...' She added as a pessimistic afterthought.

But even so, despite her common sense and self-preservation screaming and protesting otherwise, she felt as if she couldn't just leave him.

Before she even knew what she was doing she had already taken off into the young man's direction as he was now being pursued by cops.

Why couldn't she just leave well enough alone?

Freedom pushed down the bitter laughter that seemed to be well up in her throat more and more often nowadays as she ran forward at an almost alarming speed.

'Because his eyes,' she caught up with them, the cops were holding the scarred young man down as he struggled, by the way he was breathing, Freedom assumed that he was having a panic attack.

'They look like ours.' Freedom squared her shoulders and approached them, 'unloved and unwanted by the world.'

A/N: Oh gosh! I finally got it done! This thing was a nightmare to write! I wasn't allowed to go trick or treating so I ended up typing all of this instead, not that that's a bad thing but I basically stayed up 'til two in the morning to finish this! Yes I re-wrote the prologue! I also fixed chapter 1 as well, so yay for me! I'm sorry I took so long but I had this major writer's block, plus schoolwork, good news: I upped my grade to a B in Biology(just barely), Bad News: I still have a D in

Algebra 2 and a C in Physics. Yes now you all know what Cloak-Guy looks like. YATTA! Smiles, anyways, please review! I'm really trying to update, I really am! Due to all the damn complaints about how horrible the name Harrietta was (yes I completely agree with all of you but if you want to know the story behind that then read the re-written prologue) so her new name is Helena! No more permanent name changes! Those are the kids official identities (notice I said nothing about the adults), and they're gonna stay that way! PLEASE REVIEW! I'm writing the next chapter as you now read! REVIEW!

NOTE: Next chap will include what all the wizards are doin' back home, so don't pee your pants alright? Also gimme input and ideas if you want! I need fillers (sorry filler haters, but I happen to love fillers that foster character development, you got a problem with that then go find some rushed plot fanfic to read.)

THANK YOU CATWRITER FOR SUGGESTING THE COOL (NEW) NAME FOR (THE FORMERLY KNOWN AS HARRIETTA) HELENA.

Oh and by the way here's the recap list!

Names of Familiars w/ Meaning/s:

Name: Valerius (means valiant in latin)

Gender: Male

Species: Stromboli Flame Viper (Mount Stromboli is a real volcano island located somewhere off the coast of Italy)

Master: Harry

Name: Rogue

Gender: Female

Species: Cat (more depth later)

Master: Harry

Name: Aisu (means ice in Japanese) Idea for the name goes to 'Escape My Reality' THANK YOU! =)

Gender: Female

Species: Ice Phoenix(?) will be explained at a later date

Master: Shiloh

Name: Garren (means Guardian in German)

Gender: Male

Species: German Shepherd mix

Master: Helena or Freedom (it's debatable)

OOOOOOOOOO

PEACE OUT YO! (makes peace sign) (*moonwalks on da ceiling*) ;)

Chapter 27: Lament Chronicles: A Mother's Lament

All was not well within the Potter house.

The disappearance of the both their oldest and youngest children had shaken up everything within the Potter house.

First they had gone to the Dursleys, as much as James despised them, the feelings were mutual. But Lily always wanted to patch up things between her and her sister's family.

She was the only one unfortunately.

Petunia and family had claimed that the children had been kidnapped whilst wandering around the park when they'd been told not to.

Lily, James, Remus and Sirius found it highly suspicious, and a little too full of holes. They had checked with the muggle police and had come up dry. But they couldn't do anything about that.

Remus had left in search of a job, and the children. They were only five for god sakes! Despite anything really, he felt that he could do better to look for them in any town he stayed in, since it was difficult for him to get a job anyways.

Soon news had leaked out, though heaven knows how, and the Daily Prophet among other newspapers were scrambling to cover the story of 'The-Children-Who-Vanished.' It was assumed, that they were kidnapped by vengeful Dark Wizards. Naturally, this speculation did nothing to ease one Lily Potter's worries.

In truth now that she looked back, she wished that she had hugged her daughter more, and held them both more often than she had gotten to, which was, sadly to say, few and far between. She wished that she could've heard her daughter speak in hers or James' presences, just once. She'd only heard from Remus and Sirius that Harrietta had spoken to them, many times in fact.

Lily felt like crying again, that was all she really did much of really, even with her new bundle of joy nestled within her protective arms.

Yes, as of eight months ago, Lily had been pregnant with her fourth child. A beautiful baby girl with vivid green eyes and black hair, she looked so much the little boy she'd lost.

Her thoughts drifted brokenly as she cradled her almost two month old daughter, whose name was Rosalyn Emilia Potter, or Rosie for short. Lily tried to smile as her daughter lay cradled in her arms, but it turned out more, more forced than she had intended it to be.

When was the last time she had held her other two children like this?

Harry was, a quiet, sweet child who would smile softly. She remembered looking into his eyes once, they were filled with, confusion. Confusion of what some may ask?

Harrietta never made eye contact, she would simply stare straight ahead and keep going. She seemed off in her own little world and acted as if no-one but her youngest brother was a part of it. Other than that she often faded into the background, at the age of five she had garnered the ability to be easily ignored.

That wasn't right, mothers aren't supposed to let any of their babies fade into the background. They're supposed to love them and nurture them. Lily felt the tears threaten to spill over her eyelids again.

Harry's confusion, she remembered, she and James were the cause. When she thought about it, Harrietta always seemed to hang around where he was as if he would disappear. Ever since that day they had gotten a firecall from St. Mungo's about Harry. Unfortunately, Harrietta refused to say anything after she and James had shown up.

They never figured out how Harry had gotten several broken ribs and a broken arm. James and herself had felt like bad parents to not have noticed through the rush to not miss their appointment.

Harry had been naturally helpful, and Lily remembered when he would try to play with his brother. Though it usually escalated to a point where Hayden would pull his little brother's hair viscously, causing Harry to cry.

Harrietta never interacted with any of the other children, whether it was parties, or Hayden, or even children at any other place. She would just, stand there, and shadow Harry. When Harrietta wasn't shadowing Harry, she was in some dark corner of the house, whether it was the attic or the basement, she would find those rooms and sit quietly.

To be quite frank, Lily found it odd, and a bit creepy.

She had wondered why, in the few months they had been left at her sister's house, Harry and Harrietta hadn't reacted as much as she thought they would. Originally, she and James had expected protest, but she remembered hugging Harry goodbye, his eyes, now that she thought about it, there was confusion, and hurt in them.

They were so sure that their children were safe, Headmaster Dumbledore had assured them of the precautions he had taken to keep them safe, he was a friend of the family after all he should care.

They had tracking charms placed on them, so that they could be found at anytime, then they had suddenly disappeared, as the Headmaster had told them they had. Then they had found evidence, evidence that had disturbed them greatly.

Her babies had been abused, beaten by their relatives. Lily wept openly now, she was their mother! How could she have let that happen? What kind of mother was she?

The children were still missing and James still went out every day, missing posters, they were in practically every wizarding newspaper that had written about them. As if those papers cared anything for her children, Lily thought venomously, they only looked for the next story that gets them a paycheck. There were hardly any good newspapers out there anymore really.

The search had gone on, and on, and on.

And still nothing.

The Aurors were giving up, except James and Sirius. They still searched, though they too were beginning to lose hope all the same.

But still they all looked, searched, prayed

She looked at the little girl cradled within her arms, a reminder of her mistakes.

'Don't worry,' she thought as she watched her slumbering daughter, still lost in her remorse. 'Harry, Harrietta, I'm so sorry...'

"Mum! Mum! Mum!" Hayden had run in, "Le's go play!" He shouted excitedly.

His yelling had awoken Rosie, and she cried.

"No Hayden, besides, it's time for your nap." Lily answered gently.

"NO! Wanna play!" Hayden whined loudly, upsetting his little sister even more.

"Hayden Godric Potter, you will not whine." Lily said, remembering all those times she had actually tolerated this behavior, well no more.

"Mummy! WANNA PLAY!" Then he tried to garner her attention by attention by pushing his sister out of her arms, though he didn't succeed, Lily had reached her limit.

Then James took action, for the past minute he had been watching the scene before him unfold, his son was a right brat, and trying to push his sister out of his mother's arms? That was the last straw.

He grabbed his son by the ear and put him over his knee and swatted him enough to make him burst out into tears, he didn't spank Hayden very hard, it was just that Hayden had never been spanked before, so he cried about it.

"You will not push your sister." James stated firmly to his son, "you will not hurt your sister, and you will never disrespect your Mother like that."

So marks the day the Potter's started their attempt to undo the spoilage of five years to their son, though that would prove in the future much easier said than done.

Lily looked at Rosie again.

'My children, I'm sorry I failed you.' She thought as she brushed at the baby girl's head, 'I won't fail you Rosie, I promise, I won't forget you, your big brother and sister would've wanted that...'

So goes a Mother's Lament.

A/N: Hi! Sorry for taking so long but I had to edit, though it still looks like crap to me, though that might just be Sadie talking. Sorry, please be honest does this chapter suck? Please review! Constructive criticism is fine, just no flames, all flames shall be converted into fire crystal thingies for my character on Mabinogi. Thank you all for reading! Yes I know that I changed Harrietta's name into Helena in the last chapter, but no-one but my OCs and Harry know about that. After the Lament Chronicles, I go back to the Travel Chronicles, I'm doing this because I'm doing this story in basic chronological order (until something else comes up that I have planned for later, much later), as to not confuse you people. So just so people don't go, why are these called the Travel Chronicles too, when the Lament Chronicles started back here? Well this is in order dammit! Sorry, 'bout the rant! Thank ya'll fer readin'! I love reviews! Reviews make me and my muses happy and more inclined to write! So begins the Lament Chronicles! For all the people who wondered what the wizards back home were doing all this time, well here's your update! REVIEW PLZ!

Chapter 28: Lament Chronicles: Regrets of a Father

Auror James Potter was not at home, he was out scouring London, and any other nearby city or town.

He was looking for his lost children, his youngest son, and his oldest(and only) daughter. He saw children, walking with their parents, smiling, happy.

James felt another stab of pain in his heart, for the life of him he could only remember trying to make his middle child happy.

He was so stupid.

How could he? He loved, all three of his children, but he only showed it to one? What kind of Father does that?

The Dursleys had claimed, stupidly, that the children had been kidnapped. But that had led them to going to the muggle police, which led them to discovering that the Dursleys had never filed a missing persons case.

After going back to the house on Privet Drive, Sirius had done an impromptu search yielding an answer, a disturbingly morbid one.

Those damn in-laws had abused his children, badly. Now they were missing, under veritaserum, Vernon Dursley had confessed to beating them and treating them worse than house elves, then abandoning them in the middle of a forest. But oddly, James could do nothing but find blame for no-one, but himself...

But what really drove the knife into his heart, were those words, scrawled to cover more than half of the cupboard's back wall in browning letters.

He didn't know it at first glance, but the words, they were written in blood which Moony had confirmed.

Every word, every blood stain that marred the inside of that cupboard drove yet another hot iron nail into his heart, his conscience, his soul. He looked at his remaining child, and saw a spoilt child, as young as he may have been.

What kind of Father was he?

He asked himself the same question, over and over again.

Hating himself more and more, as remorse, and emptiness filled his very being. He disciplined his remaining son, and watched his new daughter laugh in Lily's arms. He knew, he failed two of his children...

And now, he hoped, prayed, pleaded, and cried to any deity that would listen, that he could find them.

So every day, he went through hundreds of Floos, stores, cities even, searching for them. He would not relent, until they were found, despite the other people looking for them...

He looked and looked, and with a heavy heart he could observe all the families out and about strolling, getting ready for the holidays...

When had he done that with all his children? Would he get a chance to rectify those grave mistakes?

Even so, would his children have it in their hearts to forgive him? He knew, that if it were he himself, he wouldn't forgive, and James felt that he didn't deserve that much.

He felt even more sad, guilt, shame, remorse, whatever you want to call it, whenever he saw how melancholy Lily had become. The holes in that home were showing, and it ached.

So in that frigid weather, James Potter searched, every backalley, every shop, every street, just looking for one glimpse, one sign that his children still lived.

So well into the nights James searched, calling out their names desperate for an answer, going to every police and Auror station asking if anyone had seen them, and even going as far as to scour over the towns and woods on his broom beneath a notice-me-not charm.

He would search and search, and still, even with how truly sorry he was, those words...

Those words written on the cupboard's back wall would haunt him, forever...

As so goes the regrets of a Father...

A/N: Okay, I know it took forever, but I have a thing called a life you know. Plus, it's like I'm my class's emotional dartboard, it sucks when people get all up in your face for simply being there, and then people wonder why I'm always in such a bad mood or why I hate school nowadays. Then there's homework, the science fair that I haven't started that's due on the 11th, and that pesky history project that's due I don't know when... Anyways, I finally got around to typing this up, I think it's good, but is it too superficial? I want the Lament Chronicles to illustrate sadness and despair that the characters left behind are feeling right now. Anyways, please review, Happy After-Thanksgiving! Can you believe it, I got sick the day before Thanksgiving! But one can't stay down, when good food's right in front of ya! Anyways, peace out yo! Review PLZ! Thx! Peace out, yo! (moonwalks on the ceiling)

Chapter 29: Lament Chronicles: A Lycan's Grief

Remus Lupin was depressed, to put it bluntly.

On top of that he was conflicted, torn between the chilling truth and just being angry. He remembered staring at the cupboard back wall, words written in blood.

He always told Lily and James that they should pay more attention to Harrietta and Harry, but now, well...

Remus couldn't help but feel as if he himself was to blame? Why didn't he question the Headmaster's idea, especially when Lily and James told him and Sirius about what they had decided to do.

He and Sirius had wanted to check on the siblings, but Dumbledore had convinced Lily and James that the two children needed to have no contact from the magical world for a small while, why?

They were both certainly intelligent enough to be sat down and have the situation explained to them, not sent away.

Remus sighed wearily, the Dursleys may have been in jail but, back there, staring at that bloodied cupboard, he'd truly felt like killing them.

He even found himself wishing that he'd meet those, those child-abusing bastards on the night with a full moon, see how smug they'd be then.

Currently, both Sirius and James were still looking, officially, as Aurors, for the two children, with no luck.

Remus sighed as he boarded the muggle bus, he had been recently fired after his employer became aware of his lycanthropy problem. So he was out of a job, again...

He decided to look elsewhere, perhaps they were kidnapped or maybe just lost. Anyhow, he decided to search for them throughout his job search.

He felt as if he could do nothing, no matter how hard anyone looked, they were nowhere to be found.

Remus sighed and stared out the window.

He had to find them, not just for Lily and James but for their sakes to. He had to apologize to them, for not saying anything, for leaving something that needed to be said silent.

The situation seemed completely hopeless.

"Hey mister?" Remus was jerked out of his thoughts by a small voice next to him, his gaze was drawn away from the window and to the person sitting next to him.

"Yes?" Remus's answer was practically automatic, then he noticed it was a small boy, about five or four years old, looking at him, at least Remus could assume so, through a mass of fluffy black hair that obscured most if not all the boy's features.

"Somethin' wrong?" He asked innocently.

"Nothing's wrong." Remus smiled gently, "where are your parents? Shouldn't you be with them? They'll be worried."

"Nah, their sittin' in the back," The child scratched his head, "you looked sad."

"Do I now?" Remus answered back, the child was oddly articulate for his apparent age.

"You'll find what yer lookin' for if ya keep at it." The child blurted out suddenly with a wide grin.

"You sound so sure of that." Remus said back forgetting that he was actually talking to a five year old.

"Yep. Cause if ya keep tryin' you'll still get results, and that's better than not tryin' at all, cause not tryin' gives nobody nothing." Then with that the child was silent.

It wasn't that Remus didn't want them to be somewhere out there, he was just afraid of the situation that Harry or Harrietta could be facing right now. Were they dead? Hurt? Remus didn't dare think what could be worse, he didn't even want to consider it.

But, the kid was right, he couldn't give up hope yet. It was a big world and he wasn't helping anyone by wallowing in regrets, Remus thought, a feeling of hope starting bloom in his chest. He turned his gaze back to the boy, then his eyes widened.

The boy was gone.

Remus poked his head out to look down the aisle, no sign of the fluffy black hair anywhere.

The bus came to a halt, well, this looked as good a stop as any, thought Remus as he grabbed his bag and patted his pocket to assure himself that his magically shrunken trunk, old and tatty as it may have been, was still there, walked down the aisle and stepped off the bus.

'Pity,' Thought Remus as the chilly air bit into the exposed skin of his wrists and face, 'I should have thanked him.'

Then the Lycan proceeded to walk down the sidewalk as it the sky grew darker, he had a mission, self-imposed, he couldn't fail Harry and Harrietta.

He wouldn't fail them, not again.

OOOOOOOOOOO

Back on the Bus...

"Where were you?" A brunette woman addressed a small boy blankly.

"Givin' some guy a piece o' advice." The child answered the woman, seating himself onto her lap to stare out the window.

"Don't wander off." She said with a slight harshness, barely noticeable. "It'll get you in a ton a shit and I'll won't be there to save you guys' asses got it?"

"Watch the language dere missy." Said a scarred man seated next to her smiling like an idiot without a care in the world. But by now,

his companions of the road knew better, what lay beneath his airy grin and random ADD moments.

"Hey Ellie! C'mere! Lookit!" The boy cried excitedly dragged a little girl almost his own age, from her seat across the bus aisle and to the window.

"Don' call me that you (censored) retard!" She spat at his irritably.

"Bu' it's an awesome nickname ever' s'nce ya changed yer name to Helena!" He chirped excitedly, Helena sighed in an almost cynical fashion then proceeded to look out the window, gazing at the scenery flashing by...

A/N: Ooooooooooooo! So close! Anyways, I'm back, yeah I know, sorry for dropping off the face of the planet, but I had a serious case of no-word-itis. I know, confusing timeline, but when the Lament Chronicles are over, I'll go back to where I left off on the Travel Chronicles. Sorry about the confusing-ness. I've been failing my math and physics classes, grrrrr, evil subjects... Anyways, please review and tell me what you all think. No flames, flames are mean, sorry if I don't know the correct terminology for stuff in the U.K., I've never been there and with the way money's going, I won't be going anywhere anytime soon at all... Anyways, I usually research pretty much everything I can before I write it, I'm doing my best to be accurate okay? Thank you for being patient with me my faithful reviewers/readers! Please review! I'm typing the next 2 chaps as we speak. Peace OUT! ;)

Chapter 30: Lament Chronicles: Reflections of a Godfather

It was almost, unreal...

Could it have really happened?

How could he have been so blind? Sirius ignored everything around him, his eyes searching for them. Two children, his godson and goddaughter, for a sign.

A message, a sign...

Something, anything, to tell him that they were even alive.

Sirius continued down the street, the cold night air biting into every bit of exposed skin it could get to. He shoved his hands into the pockets of his coat, a muggle trench coat, he walked on sometimes holding pictures of Harry and Harrietta to people and asking if they've been seen.

No answers.

They were just, nowhere.

As hard as James and Sirius worked to find them, they came up with nothing. Then the department, oh the department, decides to call off the search, James protested and Sirius stood by him, but in the end lost that argument. Now, they could only search for Harry and Harrietta when they weren't working.

Sirius stared ahead blankly, he had no-one to blame but himself, he kept quiet. He buried his head beneath in the sand, he should have said something to Lily and James.

Don't forget your other children too.

Was it any worse that after his parents ignored him once they realized that Sirius would never be the pureblood heir that they wanted? Was it right to compare the two?

James and Lily were nothing like them, but with the situation, he could feel for Harrietta and Harry. He knew what it was like, though they were more slipped-through-the-cracks ignored, and the Black's

Matriarch and Patriarch had ignored and often degraded their eldest son when they could.

Sirius clenched his fists angrily, his eyes scanning the area again as if the missing children would simply pop up out of thin air if he looked hard enough.

He walked on, shouldn't it rain, like in those muggle pictures shows? Lily said that it always rained when the atmosphere was so bleak.

It didn't.

The sun just set, Remus was still leaving to find a job somewhere in the muggle world, the children were still missing, James and Lily were still searching.

When the war ended, the Potters were alive, Remus was alive, they were Sirius's family, he had never told anyone, but he had been so relieved. For all his childishness, his fooling around, his jokes, he was staggeringly afraid, that he'd lose the people he'd come to love so much and consider family.

Sirius wondered vaguely as he cast another point-me spell with his wand in vain, why didn't it rain? It was certainly sad enough.

They had to be found, he had to see them, were they all too late? Was this all in vain? Even if they were found, would they be traumatized? Of course they'd be, they probably thought that they were completely abandoned, they had right to hate or dislike all of them if the children wanted to.

Lily had had another child, a beautiful little girl. Another goddaughter, she had three godfathers, Sirius himself, Remus and, much to the dog animagus's protest, Snape.

But he could hardly focus on his resentment, in the light of the level of abuse and violence the former Marauders had discovered Harry and Harrietta to have suffered.

Everything was supposed to have ended with the war, it wasn't supposed to be like this. They were supposed to grow up, normal lives, wonderful ones.

Sirius smiled, but it left a bad taste in his mouth, it was so bitter. His chest hurt, everything felt heavier, his body, his limbs, his stomach, his chest, as if he were drug down by weights of lead.

For all the man knew, they could be lying dead in some alleyway, they could be alone, their blood spattering the wall, afraid...

...

Wanting to die...

Sirius bent over, and threw up into a trash can, his retching heard by no-one. Someone walked by, scooted away, a disconcerted look on his face, that's the way it is right, just ignore it and it'll go away, it'll get better.

'No it won't.' Thought Sirius, bending over and expelling the contents of his stomach into the trash can. 'It doesn't just go away, something must be done about it.'

Sirius straightened, and walked on, to find and search for them, as the last of the sunset's light disappeared beneath the horizon.

Everything was so silent, so surreal.

Rain would have been fitting for a scene such as this, Sirius thought bleakly as he looked up at the night sky above him.

There wasn't a single star, not a one, in the sky. The clouds must've been covering them...

But it still didn't rain.

'Life' Sirius though, 'isn't like that.'

A/N: Yes I know, two updates? Wow... Anyways, sorry if it's a bit depressing, I'm just trying to set a mood here. Anyways, yeah, Sirius is having a bit of a 'growing up' moment here, or at least I think so. Please tell me if I did a good job okay? Do you think it any good? Please review, tell me what you think. Flames will be promptly deleted after being used to roast marshmallows for my cousin and I. Peace out, thank you to all my faithful reviewers, it means a lot to me. NB, signing off...

Chapter 31: Lament Chronicles: Messages

Somewhere, on a perfectly normal street called Privet Drive, was a house, house number four to be exact.

A perfectly ordinary lived there, now under investigation from perfectly unordinary (by their own standard anyways) people.

There was a cupboard in that house, a cupboard beneath the stairs, and it lay closed. But its impact, lay beyond its door, where it had, for several months housed two small children.

Two, small, abused children.

The first person to see the inside besides the victims and the victimizers, was one Sirius Orion Black. The floor and walls were covered with stains, blood stains, of the two children who'd been locked inside on multiples occasions.

One Remus John Lupin, wished on many occasions that he'd never been inflicted with the curse of being a werewolf, even more so that day. He could smell both Harry's and Retta's blood stain those walls. Then a vacuum fell forward, and something caught his eye, and he shifted cleaning supplies aside and stared.

Words, a message, a whole written message was on that back wall, Sirius had called James and with James came Lily as well.

Those words, cut into the hearts of everyone present like a hot knife through butter. Those words, haunting, empty, morbid, so many words to describe the chilling effect they evoked.

And even as they leave that house in search of those two children, those words held more weight than anything else on their minds for a very long time.

Now that house lay empty, its former adult inhabitants in jail, and their spoilt whale of a child at a relative's house.

And still now, on the back wall of a cupboard under the stairs were the words drawn in neat childish letters and bad spelling...

here lay the childhood of Harry & Retta

weell surviiv

no thanx to abandoners

blood that's poolin' on this cuboard floor

what'd we do rong?

why'd we get left

fire's burnin

it seethes

it hurts

it burns

I HATE it

payne

screaming

nightmares

darkness

blood

hoome's nowere
not anymore

brokken pieces,

shattered glass,

dying whispers

shattered glass...

shatterglasss

dead dreams,
shatterglass,
shattered eyes,
glassees shatters cut
makes us bleed
I M the monster in the closet
We r shatterglass,
Destroyer of destroyers,
Monsters beware,
Bigger monster iz heer.

All over the back wall, the spidery red letters seemed to climb upon that wall, odd drawings, symbols, and jumbled words that overlapped each other so much they were rendered indecipherable; they all littered the back wall and ran off to the sides even...

The Aurors used that cupboard as evidence, though the Potters prosecuted the Dursleys in the muggle world first, then by Wizarding Law.

Even so, the words remained there, in a now empty house.

Written in the blood of two children...

But towards the bottom of the cupboard, if one looked very carefully, you could see the one final message that had been etched into the wood backing long before anyone had ever even lived in Number 4 Privet Drive.

The Tracker

The Guide

The Shadow

The Catalyst

The Nurturer

The Savior

Collect the threads, mend the seams, fix the tears made by time

Unite to live

Divided will burn.

But of course the door was magically sealed now with a stasis charm to preserve it as evidence. But no-one would see it now...

A/N: Yeeeeeeah... I know, whoever wrote the first part was going a bit nutty from the loss of blood. Oooo, cryptic message... Too bad no-one saw it, cept you guys and myself... Heh, heh, heh, okay back to playing pokemon for me! Please review! WOOT! The Lament Chronicles are officially OVER! Review to tell me what you all think, please! (smiles) PEACE OUT! ;)

Chapter 32: Travel Chronicles: Of Formal Introductions & A Pack

Okay this, was, ridiculous.

The brunette woman sighed as she took off after the man who had, essentially, saved her life and endangered it, all within the first ten minutes of meeting the guy. Why did she get involved? It was simple, not actual 'kindness' or 'goodwill' that civilians usually use to refer to, but pure, cold, hard logic.

This man, helpful or not, was powerful and had enough gall and skills with a knife to literally butcher several trained (some mediocre and some otherwise) Crytex workers in less than ten minutes. Most of them were Techs (short for technicians that doubled as lab assistants) while there were other job designations, such as security guards and those on the gun squads.

Freedom had long lost the urge to shudder as memories of blood, agonized screams, and dead bodies assaulted her train of thought. It wasn't that she didn't care, but she had seen more than several lifetimes worth of those, somehow, her mind just boiled down to what she called her 'Rules of Life.'

Like when seeing a corpse, mangled, decaying, or otherwise, what's dead is dead. Eventually it'll decay into fertilizer, if it's eaten same deal.

The list went on, every rule and lesson Freedom had made herself remember, the rules that helped her survive, when the others she had trained with fell to their knees and died. That's all it boiled down to, what are you willing to do to survive?

If only life were that simple now. Freedom looked at the cops putting the scarred man in handcuffs and dragging him off to the police car.

Oh well, Freedom checked her wallet, maybe if his infraction isn't so bad, maybe she could pay the bail...

She needed answers, was he a threat? What did he want out of this deal?

That was Rule #2, Never Take ANYTHING at face value. That kind of thinking, was the kind of thinking that got you killed first.

Freedom's mouth twitched downward, years of exercising self-control in one of the highest degrees, had long removed most of her outward reactions to anything.

This man, helpful or not, had the ability to become a potential threat, a potential leak, a weakness, something, dangerous all the same.

It would be good if the guy was neutral, perhaps she could 'ensure' his silence about herself and the children's whereabouts. The cool metal of the handgun that was holstered within an inner pocket sewn on the inside of her new jacket she'd bought while getting the kids clothes. It was a blend of brown, grey, and black, not the most stylish, but unnoticeably ordinary and it blended in with most surroundings pretty well.

The possibility that the cloaked man could be an ally? Not likely, Freedom decided not to get her hopes up she knew all too well what wishful thinking did for her.

Crap nothing, that's what.

Freedom shoved her hands into her pockets and ignored the Christmas lights, it was just another day, besides... It was a whole month before December anyways.

Freedom breathed a deep, inaudible breath, then headed towards the nearest police station.

Was that a person prancing through the streets in a Santa suit? In November?

'Civilians are so weird.' Freedom thought, giving the man a wide berth as she continued down the sidewalk.

OOOOOOOOOOO

"Hey guys? Who's awake?" Came a small, excited voice from the darkness of the motel room.

"Quiet, wanna sleep." Came Harry's groggy response, as he turned over and buried his head into a pillow.

Rogue meowed in agreement .

There was a silence.

PHHLLLRRRRRTT!

Someone farted,

"Aw ew!" Shiloh voiced what everyone in the room was thinking.

"Alrigh' who ate beans?" The re-dubbed Helena grumbled, waking up almost instantly.

"Not me." They all said at the same time.

Garren sat by the door, watching both the door and window with the attentiveness of a paranoid spy.

The kids tried to sleep again, but found that as sleep continued to elude them, they grew more and more awake.

"We're no' getting' back ta sleep are we?" Helena sighed out.

"Nope." Shiloh chirped back.

"It's a rhetorical question, you dummy." She shot back.

"Re- Helena," Harry stumbled over his sister's new name, "don't be so irr-table."

"Rrm." She mumbled indecipherably.

"Well, um- Wait!" Shiloh exclaimed, "we haven't formally introduced ourselves, Mor- Freedom says that's what civilians do. My name's Shiloh, formerly experiment 00578, sector 672-30/Q. It's nice to meet you! What are your names?"

His companions stared at him for a moment, before the silence was broken by a voice.

"Nathaniel Scott Cohmnall, but ya'll c'n call me Scott." The older boy grinned, it was the weirdest experience, back at the Circus, all his fellow 'prisoners' would strangle him for the food he was given, no

matter how little. It was so odd, not fighting anymore, but he was also afraid that he would wake up to his cage and another Fire-Acrobatics Show.

"My name's Harrison James Potter, but you can call me Harry." Harry said happily.

"Cool." Scott said sleepily.

"Helena Noelle Potter-" The white-haired girl started.

"Ellie!" Shiloh chirped happily.

...

"What?" The girl asked.

"Ellie, it's the perfect nickname." Shiloh said.

"No." Helena said flatly.

"Why not?" Shiloh's face went serious for a few seconds.

"Because."

"Because isn't an answer." Shiloh said back.

This argument went on for a few minutes until they finally grew silent, then Scott spoke.

"Since we don't got anythin' else to do tonight, and I we ain't sleeping anytime soon, how about we talk about ourselves?" The ten year werewolf old sat up on the bed.

"Okay, I'll start!" Shiloh jumped up enthusiastically, falling off the bed, and nearly landing on Rogue. The cat in question had moved away just in time, hissing with indignation.

"You okay?" Harry asked.

"Yup!" Then Shiloh launched into his story. "Okay, my earliest memory is of a lady cutting someone to pieces, someone dragging me away, someone screaming, then the rest are all at the facility."

Shiloh shuddered briefly, Helena and Harry could understand, Harry may have not been captured there, but he had passed several open laboratories, he could only imagine the kind of horrible things that were done to people in there.

Helena stared at him, he spoke of the ordeal with such ease, with her recent mutation, it was just nuts. But, she didn't want to talk about the Dursleys or hers and Harry's parents.

But, if the overly-hyper boy in front of her could talk about it then she could do it too!

"Okay, the name's Helena, I'm minutes older than Harry," She pointed towards her brother, "our parents left us with abusive monsters who deserve to be killed, brought back to life, tortured, maimed, then killed again, only to be thrown into the depths of-"

"Sis, you're goin' off topic." Harry interrupted his sister's oncoming rant, she had said this once before, while they were alone, before she was kidnapped by the crazy scientist people.

"Oh," Helena stopped abruptly, glaring at her brother for interrupting her, "sorry, anyways, were part of a set of triplets, our other brother's a spoiled princess," The five year old spat with a venomous tone much too malicious for a normal five year old. "Oh yeah, and let's not forget the recent, mutant dog I can turn into."

"And the magic, don't forget the magic." Harry added.

"Yeah, magic. You know hocus pocus and all that crapola." Helena sat down quietly.

"Seriously?" Shiloh said, then his face took on a more puzzled expression, "what's magic?"

"Is this kid for real?" Scott asked, jerking a thumb towards the hyperactive child sitting next to him.

"Why'd ya ask that?" Shiloh looked confused, "of course I'm real, unless someone dosed you with opium or something..." His small voice trailed off in thought.

"What the hell is opium?" Helena said with a cocked eyebrow.

"A hallu- halliano- halluci-, a thing that makes you see things that aren't really there, people make you drink it or they stick a needle in your arm 'r sumthin'..." Shiloh answered.

"Oh." Harry said, though he really didn't get it. Then again, what five-year old would?

Scott was familiar with drugs, not that he was hooked on them or anything. But he'd heard plenty from his cage in the circus, he'd even seen the Ringmaster slip drugs into the food most of the 'performers' were given before the night shows.

Scott was sure that the kid was referring to some kind of drug or another.

"Well, I'm a werewolf..." The ten-year old's voice was a little unsure, he wasn't exactly sure how to deal with little kids, or people in general, spending most of your life in a cage will do that to a person you know?

"Really?" Harry said, "Our Uncle Moony's a werewolf-"

"Really?" Scott felt his heart lighten a bit, well, at least maybe he wasn't the only one of his kind. Some days, back when he was caged, he'd wonder if he was the last born werewolf on earth, but, of course, that was just depressive, food-deprived and pain-ridden thinking buzzing around in his young head at the time...

"Yeah, he turns into one every full moon, tha's why we call him our Uncle Moony." Harry explained in about, three breaths.

Helena remained passive.

"Oh, he's not a werewolf then." Scott said, his expression falling a little.

"Huh?" Helena asked, every book she'd read about magical creatures mentioned werewolves at some point. Even though no-one had told her or Harry, they figured it out on their own. "Whaddya mean he's 'not a werewolf?'" She said skeptically.

"Yeah, well, first of all, you can only be born a werewolf, not become one. At least that's what I think they told me..." Scott's voice trailed off unexpectedly.

"What's a werewolf?" Shiloh asked, but his query was promptly ignored as the other three children threw questions and statements.

"Who?" Harry said as he attempted to smooth his messy hair.

"My Father, he used to tell me the history of my people every night before bed." Scott answered Harry.

"What's a werewolf?"

"Well, you can turn into a Wolfman, that's-" Started Harry.

"What's a werewolf?"

"Not a werewolf. That's a Lycan, Lycans are humans who were given Lycanthropy by another Lycan or an infected werewolf." Scott clarified, at the same time interrupting Harry.

The green-eyed boy glared at him.

"Well gee that explains so much..." Helena remarked sarcastically.

"Well-" Bristled Scott, ready to tell the girl off.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF ALL THINGS SY-EN-TEEF-IC IS A WEREWOLF?" Shiloh shouted suddenly.

"OW!" Scott flinched at the sheer volume and proximity of the young five-year old's shout, to his increasingly sensitive ears and sense of hearing. Not to mention that he also fell off the bed, headfirst, onto the floor.

"You alright?" The three asked worriedly at the same time, immediately hopping down from their seats on the two parallel beds to stare at the werewolf on the floor.

The ten-year old groaned, rubbing his head then looked at the worried five-year olds.

Oddly enough he wasn't mad, what right would he have to be anyways? They were only five, he was older than them anyways, despite the fact that they seemed a lot more intelligent than other coddled children he'd seen from one side of the cage bars...

"Look, just don't yell too loud. My ears are sensitive ya know?" Scott sat up, remaining seated on floor.

"Sorry." Shiloh muttered apologetically.

"S'okay." Scott answered, then he smiled.

"What?" Harry asked, seeing the older boy's expression.

"I don't know, maybe it's the stress, lack of food, or the fact that I've had no sleep, but... I just got out of a twisted nightmare come to life, and yet here I am, talking with a trio of fire-year olds..." The older boy had begun to giggle uncontrollably.

The younger kids, began to think about all that had just happened within, what the past two weeks? Maybe one?

And truly, now here they were just sitting here, feeling all awkward about what to talk about.

The giggling fits were contagious, as they started with slight giggles, before it turned into full-blown bouts of laughter.

The four animals, Valerius, Aisu, Rogue and Garren, all stared at the kids, happy that they were at least still able to laugh. But the four animals all thought the same thing as they stared at 'their' new humans.

'Must be the lack of sleep and food.'

When their laughter had finally abated, the ice was truly broken between them.

And with that, they began to share, albeit carefully, about themselves to each other. Thus marking the true beginning of their friendship.

Garren viewed the Man-pups with the dog equivalent of a smile, they were a pack already.

He liked that.

Aisu watched her new chicks with a motherly eye, Rogue stretched, nonchalantly flexing her claws as well, Valerius chased a mouse into a corner.

Garren watched the door, waiting for New-Alpha's return.

Yes, they were most definitely a pack.

PHHHHHHRRRTTTT!

"Aw, man, that's jus' nasty." Harry covered his nose.

"I kun-ker." Shiloh agreed.

"Alright new rule-" Started Scott.

"No more god-damn, fucking beans from'a can!" Finished Helena, hiding her nose beneath her t-shirt.

Then they began to laugh.

A/N: YES! I finally finished it! Oh god that took FOREVER! WOOT! YAHHH! WAAAHOOOOOOOO! I edited it and re-typed it several times! God! It feels so good to finish a chapter WOOT! Please review! Tell me what ya'll think, and yeah the werewolf differentiating from a lycan thing will be explained at a later date. REVIEW! WOO! PEACE OUT! (moonwalks on the ceiling) ;)

Chapter 33: Travel Chronicles: One Not So Fuzzy Meeting & One Grinning Moron

Freedom sighed, okay, she wouldn't be able to intervene...

Yet.

The variables this presented were endless, unpredictable. This guy knew something, but she didn't know what, he was an unknown.

Sure he 'helped' them, but what were his ulterior motives? Freedom was no fool, she never took anything at face-value anymore. Everything had risks, every new person brought new variables and possibilities to the field.

Tiny to huge differences that could be either an edge, or a detriment.

An edge was preferable, it helped one out of all sorts of tight-spots.

Detriments, however, usually led to somebody, most likely yourself, biting the dust then having your enemies desecrating your corpse while it was still warm.

Freedom sighed mentally, this was so much more trouble than it was really worth...

But she had to think about the long run...

Her mind moved at a speed that would have bewildered her once upon a time. But now, it was quite ordinary, observing, analyzing, planning, all within a few seconds or minutes. She had two options, bail the man out of jail, or go for a jailbreak.

Risk or risk?

Jailbreak, if successful wouldn't leave a paper-trail, or computer-trail as Freedom mentally referred to it. If she was caught, on tape, by witness, not only would that suck for her, it would just make more work for her...

'Bail out it is then.' Freedom decided. She took another step, then fell straight onto instinct.

She slumped her shoulders a little, shifted her pace, pace length, and changed her body language completely.

Freedom almost felt, comfortable. Slipping into one of the many masks she'd used hundreds of times in her lifetime, felt about as natural to the brunette woman as breathing.

Like a reflex.

She went to several stations, with no luck, he must've been at this one.

Freedom walked through the door nonchalantly, and approached the front desk.

She looked up at the man, who put down the phone and sighed wearily.

'Time to work my own brand of magic.'

"Sir, I am here to inquire the grounds that someone has been arrested on, he's a friend of mine." Freedom said, smiling politely. Just because she was almost emotionless didn't mean she couldn't act.

If she couldn't, well, she would've been dead already.

"Well miss, could you possibly describe 'im?" The man was in a British police uniform with thinning brown hair and a big bushy mustache.

"Yeah, he's tall like a beanpole, brown hair, and has a lotta scars on his face, ya can't miss him." Freedom answered lightly.

"Oh 'im!" The man's eyes shown with recognition, "yeah, he was nabbed for being drunk on da street again."

"Really?" Freedom asked.

"W'll, we c'n only assume 'he's drunk. I mean, the man will go through da streets raving 'bout giant cupcakes and rabid cheetah puppies 'bout once every other week since 'e's been here." The

officer looked at Freedom with some skepticism, "didn't know he 'ad any friends though."

"Yeah, well, we haven't been in touch recently, just coming down to check on him." Freedom explained calmly, "anyways, what about bail?"

"You're bailin' 'im out?" The officer looked incredulous.

"Yeah," Freedom gave a grin, "he's my friend, what are friends for if not to bail you out of jail?"

"Yeah guess so," The officer smiled faintly, well at least the man had someone responsible who cared about him, he handed the brunette woman the paperwork which she began to immediately fill out.

"Kay, that'll be 'bout fifty-seven pounds an' six pence." The man held out his hand.

Freedom sighed and dug the amount out of her new wallet, some days being as careful as she always was more tedious than anything.

Things were far simpler when you did as you were told and let people walk all over you, breaking every bone they stepped on along the entire way. It was far easier to lay down and let things happen, but did she take the easy way? No she didn't, whether that was the right decision or not remained to be seen...

"Kay, I'll just put this through then we'll bring 'im right out, oh yeah, the name's Bentley, officer Bentley, you c'n jus' wait out here miss, I'll bring 'im right out.." He started to key the information into the computer he faced for a what seemed an inordinate amount of time.

Then he got up and walked around to where the jail cells were.

So Freedom waited.

In about half an hour, Freedom caught sight of the man in question. He really was tall, a little over a foot taller than Freedom herself, then again she was on the short side...

Mussed up brown hair, murky green eyes, burn scars like a map, yep this was him alright. Freedom went right through her mental checklist quick as a cheetah.

The scarred man's murky eyes showed confusion, but he didn't say anything. Officer Bentley waved him off with a warning, and Freedom led him by the arm right out of the Police station.

The scarred man didn't say a word as Freedom practically dragged him down the sidewalk, then ducked into a dark alley.

"Okay spill." The woman's voice had lost all its politeness immediately as she spun him around and held his arms immobile behind his back whilst pressing him against the brick wall, bringing her pocketknife to rest against his neck. "what's your hand in this mess?"

"Well," the man smiled, "in normal, polite society people usually start conversations by introducing themselves." The man smiled with an eerie cheerfulness almost like Shiloh grin, only wider and it exposed more of his white teeth and... Were those unnaturally sharp canines?

Freedom glared stonily.

"I'll start," the man said, completely ignoring her and the threat on his life, "my name's Maugrim Dathe, what's yours?"

'Okay, C.S. Lewis much?' Freedom thought randomly, she had read one of those books once when she was on a scouting mission, as a library assistant.

"I'll ask a different question," Freedom said coldly, "why did you help?"

"Oh that!" Maugrim said, "well several reasons actually, one, I have a serious bone to pick with those psychos, two, what they're doin' is sick and wrong on so many levels, three, my consciences wouldn't have left me alone otherwise, four- Oh do you really want an essay?" The man smiled, again.

"That would be preferable, had I the time." Freedom's voice remained even as she spoke, her expression not betraying a single

thought. "But seeing as I don't, I'll make this simple, you have two choices, so listen up because I don't fancy repeating myself. Got it?"

Maugrim nodded, grinning again.

"Your first choice, is that you do exactly when I say, when I say it, which involves coming with me." She said.

"Ooooo," Maugrim giggled oddly, "kinky."

Freedom paused for a brief moment, registering the crude humor. Then continued speaking, as if she were unaffected, "your second choice is that you leave here and ignore me."

"What if-" Maugrim began.

"I'm not finished," Freedom's blue eyes smoldered a bit in the little light provided by a street lamp on the other side of the road. "should you fail to choose first choice I so graciously offered, you won't survive the night and the gutter rats are going to have a feast tonight." She pressed the blade closer against his neck, dangerously close to piercing the skin just above his jugular vein.

Maugrim's murky gaze met Freedom's cold one.

"Okay then," the scarred man smiled, "I'll go with you."

If Freedom had been surprised, she didn't show it, she lessened the pressure of the knife on his neck, then let go of his arms, freeing him from her hold.

Suddenly as he was stretching out his stiff muscles, she pressed the blade to his neck again.

"But make no mistake, Dathe," The blue-eyed brunette whispered icily into one of his ears, "the second I get a whiff that you're up to any funny business," she paused and stared into his eyes, her gaze stony, "will be your last. Are we clear?"

"Crystal." Maugrim answered, giving a soldier's salute.

Freedom's mind remained tensed, forever ready for him to show a sign of not keeping his word. She'd been stabbed in the back,

figuratively and literally, too many times in her life to take any chances with a stranger. But, she finally folded the pocketknife, and tucked safely into her jeans pocket.

Then she pointed towards the way she'd come, in the same direction as the motel.

"Walk." She stated.

"Whatever you say oh powerful and mighty lady." Maugrim walked out of the dark alley with Freedom following close behind, observing everything around her yet focusing on her 'prisoner' at the same time. "Might I inquire by how I should address the fair lady?" He asked with a charming, yet eerie smile.

Freedom resisted the urge to snort, fair lady indeed... Then her thoughts paused for a moment, what was her name? Her old one at least? Her mind raced, trying to find the answer, trying to remember...

Trying to remember, what had been lost only by time...

Then Freedom remembered, a broken phrase, one of her last remaining memories of her life before the company...

"You're... Derricks and y-... go f-... someday... you'll ch-... world. Don't forget... teach yo-... don't forget that-... -ve you... -ay? I'll alw-... my little Doodle-bug."

Though Freedom could no longer remember most of it, nor decipher the emotional meaning behind it, it made her feel a bit warmer. When she was being punished for a mistake back at the company, sometimes she'd remember, and the pain of her broken bones and her blood seeping onto the cold metallic floor would lessen, even if it was just a little bit.

Those words gave her the closest thing to peace she had ever experienced...

Freedom shook her head, clearing the fanciful thoughts away,

"I call you Dathe, you call me Derricks. I'm not an idiot, now hurry up, I don't have all night." Freedom prodded his shoulder.

Maugrim grinned once again, thoroughly confusing his 'captor', but she'd never admit it.

From that point on, they continued in absolute silence, passing no-one along the way. Maugrim smiled, he may have only known her for half an hour, but in truth, he could tell that behind that cold gaze there was a great protector in there.

Yes, he liked the blue-eyed, former Crytex agent, and Maugrim would bet his cloak that she'd already do almost anything for them.

But he could still practically feel the woman eyeing him shiftily for any sign of funny business.

'Ah, paranoia, it seems we have a mutual friend.'

So the two continued to walk down the sidewalk, turning and crossing another road without another word uttered between them. The dark clouds began to cover the moon, leaving only the street lamps to illuminate their way through the city...

A/N: Okay ya'll! I finally finished this chapter! WOOT! I am so happy! I just finished watching the Harry Potter movie marathon on TV! Okay, first thing's first, Cloak-Guy has a NAME! It's Maugrim A. Dathe (pronounced: day-th), don't diss it okay? I think the name is cool even though he's named after a villain. He is weird, but cool, and as you all know he's a prisoner by choice and knows a lot more than he let's on but we think he means well... But I won't give anything away, sorry no spoilers for yous... MWAHAHAHAHAHA! Anyways, I still have a conundrum, sometime tomorrow or whenever I have time, I'm going to post a poll somewhere on my profile about my not-totally-concrete-plans to go with a little Ron bashing and how I'm going to go about it. Because, I watch the movie, then read the fanfictions, now I'm just confuzzled... Ack, my brain hurts... Anyways, please REVIEW! Rose is happy when you all review! Tell me if I've made any monumental errors in my writing, flames are not accepted and shall be used to roast marshmallows for my cousin, myself and our muses. Once again, though I hate to sound redundant, PRESS DA REVIEW BUTTON RIGHT DOWN THERE!

NOTE: The nickname, "Doodle-bug" is there in honor of my Dad, he used to call me his doodle-bug all the time. May he rest in peace.

Chapter 34: Travel Chronicles: Of Nightmare Warnings & Hooded Figures

Shiloh's Dreamscape...

Crrrrrsshhhwoooshhh...

Crrrrrsshhhwoooshhh...

Crrrrrsshhhwoooshhh...

'The ocean?' Thought Shiloh foggily, he really didn't remember what the ocean was, but... It was almost... Familiar...

He was standing on a steep cliff, darkness and fog clouded his vision, but...

Water! A huge expanse of water that went as far as the eye could see that stretched to touch the ebony sky, its salty waves beat violently against the cliffside. The air was chilled; Shiloh could see the puffs of his own breath, as the gale bit sharply into his skin like needles of something colder than ice.

"Svadilfari..." A far off whisper echoed, quickly drowned out by the roar of the waves below.

The temperature dropped further, and the wind grew harsher.

Yet he remained rooted to the spot, he couldn't bring himself to move...

"Svadilfari..." The whisper was louder, but drowned out once again.

Shiloh stared at the night sky, there was a full moon out, round and white just like Freedom had told him about...

"Svadilfari-!" The voice was closer, distinctly female, very young...

Then the moonlight left, leaving Shiloh in a world of pitch black, not unlike his cell from before...

"Svadilfari!" The voice was coming from behind him, Shiloh spun around, very nearly dislodging the too fragile rocky edge he was standing on.

There stood a little girl, about his age, but that wasn't the creepy part...

She looked almost exactly like him...

Black hair, black eyes, pasty skin, her grey dress hung off her shoulders like sheets on a wooden frame, blowing and billowing with the violent wind.

"Svadilfari..." Her mouth barely moved, her dark eyes had dark circles beneath them and they bore into his.

"W- who are y-you?" Shiloh chanced to ask.

"Sigrún." She answered as her uneven black locks whipped wildly around her face. She tilted her head slightly, then the edges of her mouth quirked a bit, "hello Svadilfari."

"Wh-" Shiloh started, but was cut off by a particularly strong gust of frigid wind.

"Mother wants you to come home, Svadilfari..." Sigrún whispered tiredly, her voice sounded, exhausted.

"Mother?" Shiloh was confused, he couldn't remember that much before his life in the facility to be honest. Just a blurry picture, he assumed that he'd witnessed a murder...

"Mother's angry, brother." Her voice went a pitch higher, almost a sob.

"Brother?" Shiloh echoed, not noticing the heavy fog that had begun to settle around them.

"She's coming for you." Sigrún said, shoulders tensing. Somehow this unnerved Shiloh, it was like the time he'd been locked in a cage with one of the other –more violent- experiments, right before they attack.

Suddenly, she was looked harmless no longer, her hands which had been previously hidden by the thick fog, had long fingers that stood horribly out of proportion with her small body.

Sigrún expression took on a strained grin at him, revealing a row of pointed, uneven teeth. She lifted her hands, revealing her bloodstained claws, her grey dress was soaked with blood and Shiloh could see her stomach and other insides hanging out between her twisted, broken ribs.

In less time than it took to blink, she leapt at him. Shiloh scrambled away, only to remember where he was standing, he stumbled, barely missing a fatal fall off the cliff he stood upon. He looked down, and could make out the shadowy shapes of large, jagged rocks that lined rose out of the waves like hound's teeth...

Vicious claws dug into and around his ankle dragging him back along the ground.

He looked back at Sigrún, her teeth seemed to glint, even as the moon no longer cast its light. Her grip on his ankle was that of steel, her hand was cold, colder than the air around them, like a corpse. The most disturbing thing was the bits of torn flesh that hung off the left side of her face, the splintered bone and torn hairline mangled together in a mockery of a bow. The back of her head had no hair, as it was missing most of her skull, her bloodstained black hair hung off towards the right side of her head in a haphazard ponytail done up with a strip of bloodied leather. Her left eye had turned a shade of red, and the right a shade of silver.

Shiloh had seen many corpses before, but this-

Then she screeched, and began to drag him away from the cliff, towards a looming building bigger than anything he'd ever seen. For some reason, a feeling of panic began to well within Shiloh, he began to struggle.

Her grip only grew tighter, and her claws had pierced the skin.

"Mother's ANGRY, Svadilfari!" Sigrún yelled, Shiloh could hear screaming, weeping, wailing coming from that huge stone building.

He didn't know what it was, but he didn't want to go there. He scrabbled towards the cliff's edge only to be dragged back, closer to the source of the screaming...

He panicked, he didn't want to go! He didn't want to-! Then he did the first thing that came to mind, he kicked out his free leg, hitting Sigrún.

Right in the bloody mass that was the left side of what was left of her face.

She screamed and let go in favor of clutching her face.

Shiloh propelled himself forward, completely forgetting the little room he had in the first place. He'd sent himself right off the edge of the cliff, and he fell...

"-ake -p!" A mumbled voice sounded.

And Sigrún jumped to follow him, claws outstretched, ready to catch him. A wicked grin with all her sharp, little teeth ready to tear into his flesh.

"Wake- !"

Halfway down, she'd caught up, and sank her fanged jaws into his left shoulder.

And a scream ripped from Shiloh's throat.

"Wake up!"

"Wake up kid!"

"Wake up."

Sigrún let go suddenly, staring listlessly as they seemed to keep falling forever.

"I fear the path your feet have led," Her voice was whispery once more, and her appearance had shifted back to an even smaller girl than before, now she looked about the age of two, "be wary, for there be rough waters' ahead..."

Then there was an earsplitting roar in the distance, Sigrún looked up to where they had fallen from.

"You must wake up now..." Then she faded into the inky darkness as Shiloh hit the water.

Then he woke up...

End of Dream Sequence...

They had all finally fallen asleep, only to wake up to the sound of Shiloh screaming. They spent a good part of five minutes shaking him awake.

His eyes snapped open and he lashed out, kicking Scott right in the face.

"Ow!" Scott overbalanced again, and fell flat on his back between the two motel beds.

"Wha- What?" Shiloh was disoriented, the lights felt like they were burning holes into his eyes, though not as painfully as he thought.

"You were dreaming." Helena explained curtly.

"Dreaming?" Harry asked, "more like having a nightmare da' way he w's screamin'."

"Sorry." Shiloh rubbed the back of his head guiltily, Scott had finally recovered from his 'Foot-to'the Face' experience and sat up.

"Hey, from what I gather, we're all messed up and our lives have sucked thus far, no worries 'kay?" Scott said to Shiloh, "man, for a little thing, you sure pack quite a kick. Damn." Scott rubbed his eye whilst muttering.

"Again, sorry 'bout that." Shiloh apologized again.

"What was that about?" Harry asked quietly.

"Are we ever gonna get some sleep?" Helena paused, then answered herself with a snort, "of course not."

"Holy crap, your shoulder's bleeding!" Said Scott, sniffing the iron that had permeated through Shiloh's t-shirt. Then proceeded to rush to the bathroom and snatched two of the clean towels off the rack.

"No..." Helena said sarcastically, "you don't say, really?"

He ordered Shiloh to remove his shirt, which he complied with and pressed one towel onto Shiloh's shoulder, then the other around his ankle.

Shiloh absorbed this with only a single thought voiced.

"It was real."

Then Shiloh remembered Sigrún's last words to him...

"Fear what lies ahead, for there be rough waters ahead..."

"What was real?" Harry came closer, he had a feeling that this might've been urgent.

"My dream, a girl, called herself Sigrún, said something was after us." Shiloh said hurriedly.

"What don't we know?" Helena said remarked sarcastically, "I mean we already escaped the sciency psychos, of course they wanna kill us!" Her eyes had turned red with annoyance, and her canines and nails had sharpened somewhat and she snarled out her words.

"No, but you know. She, she bit me and had claws, and grabbed my ankle." Shiloh gestured towards his bleeding shoulder and ankle, "and I woke up with these."

Helena and Harry looked thoughtful for a moment, then answered in unison as only twins could.

"Magic."

/Good grief, what'ssssss with all the yelling?/ Valerius hissed groggily from beneath Harry's t-shirt.

/Not now Valerius./ Harry and Helena snapped in parseltongue simultaneously.

/Sssssserioussssly,/ Valerius poked out his head from the flat collar of Harry's T-shirt, /what happened? Can ssssssomebody clue me in on what in the name of Fauna issssss going on?/

/Shiloh was having a magical nightmare, then we woke him up./ Helena hissed quietly to the snake, /we'll tell Freedom 'bout it later when she gets back./

/You guysssss never get a break do you?/ Valerius muttered, shaking his head back and forth.

/Nooooo, ya don't say?/ Helena remarked, mockingly sarcastic.

"Hey um, not to be rude or anythin' but-" Shiloh held the towels onto his slightly painful, but thankfully not lethal wounds. "What's with the hissing thing?"

"Oh yeah, we can talk to snakes." Harry said with a smile.

"That's-" Scott started to say as he continued to rummage around the bag Freedom had brought in from the car; the rest were left in the vehicle. Scott was looking for bandages.

"Cool!" Shiloh finished the older boys' sentence excitedly, testing out the new lingo Freedom had been taught him a mere few hours ago.

"Yeah I know!" Harry jumped up, punching his clenched right fist into the air. "It totally rules!"

"Why can't I find the freaking bandages?" Scott exclaimed loudly, dramatically throwing his hands up in the air.

"Maybe because you didn't turn on any lights?" Harry offered helpfully.

"Considerin' that we've go' a bunch of complete crazies on our tails, I don' want to give any reason for them to search the place." Scott said quickly, his voice slipping into a slight Scottish brogue. His orange eyes reflected the dim light shed by the nightlight plugged

into the wall. For a ten year-old who'd spent a little more than half his life in a cage

"Oh." Harry said.

"AHA!" Scott said triumphantly, holding the first aid box up in the air. "I found the little blighter!"

"Yeah, you saved the world." Helena rolled her eyes.

Scott did a pretty good job bandaging Shiloh's shoulder and ankle, he'd had plenty of practice back on himself back at the Centurian circus. He winced slightly, Freedom had treated the burns on his back earlier, but they still hurt. But then again he could hardly imagine what it was like for her, Scott could clearly remember the blood that had stained her shirt, and her pulling out a bullet.

Yet she still hadn't slept yet, Scott could tell, hell even the trio of five-year olds had noticed. She barely ate when they stopped and had probably drunk a metric ton of coffee already to keep herself awake while driving!

Scott couldn't help but worry for his new role model, yes he had started considering her a bit of a role model. For some reason, she reminded him of Adolfo, though their personalities were polar opposites. She was cold and mostly distant, but she listened and despite the iciness of her gaze, Scott could tell a lot of things that she never said.

Freedom never said much besides orders, instructions, and monotone reprimands, but Scott would never forget what she said to him, the same night Adolfo died.

"Life goes on kid, it won't stop just cause you feel sad, it sucks to lose someone. But hey, at least he died on his own terms, for you, not against."

The words themselves weren't exactly comforting, but Freedom struck him as more of an 'actions speak louder than words' type of person, so Scott guessed that she wasn't all that great at comforting people. But as Adolfo said once, sometimes it was the thought that counted.

As the other children were left to their thoughts, they eventually fell asleep again. Only Shiloh remained awake, rubbing his injured shoulder as it had started to throb a bit painfully.

'Rough waters ahead?' Shiloh, unfortunately wasn't familiar with the phrase but, he couldn't help but feel the ball of apprehension in his gut sit there, like a cold stone in his stomach.

'Will we ever get a break?' Shiloh wondered as he yawned while stretching, but he resolved to tell Freedom about it when she got back.

He tried to stay awake, but his exhausted five-year old body wouldn't let him. His mind slipped off into the land of nod, restlessly.

If he'd been awake for a while longer he would've been able to hear Harry begin to toss and turn in his sleep, and the animals give a simultaneous whine.

Something horrible was near.

Something evil...

OOOOOOOOOOOOO

Outside, a cloaked figure smiled creepily, saying nothing as his cloak swept ominously in the winter/autumn wind. He sat down on a bench, and contentedly began to play with a cigarette lighter, smiling to himself with a psychotically innocent expression on his hood-obscured face...

Suddenly, he got up and walked into one of the empty motel rooms and began piling things up.

A wave of his hand and the pile glistened with a rainbow-ish liquid.

He bent down, and flicked the lighter.

Ffffffwwwwwoosssshhhhhh!

The pile lit up like a firecracker, and the room was instantly ablaze.

He walked through the door and closed it carefully behind him, and the only light illuminating his escape blazed higher and higher.

His mouth curved, his set of unnaturally sharp teeth glinted in the firelight as he hummed innocently to himself.

And with that, he disappeared, fading in the shadows of the night.

With the burning building in his wake...

A/N: Okay, yeah, I know evil cliffie. But I gotta hurry, I gotta catch a flight for London in the morning so I can't spend too much time on author's notes. I'll be back after Spring Break, which is like maybe 9 days or something. Please review! They make Rose, Sadie and me very happy! Anyways, the rainbow-ish liquid is gasoline, have you ever noticed that when you see a puddle of gasoline on the road it glints with a rainbow-ish color? Well that's what it is. So, our heroes don't ever get a break do they? Who is the Hooded figure? Will our heroes survive this encounter without the help of the adults? Will Freedom return in time? Why is the Hooded figure after them? Find out next time in the next installment of the "Maelstrom Twins"! Peace! ;)

Chapter 35: Travel Chronicles: Of Monstrous Firelight

Harry's Dreamscape...

A single sound pierced the darkness clouding Harry's mind.

Click, click.

He sat up.

A shadowy figure stood before him, was it Cloak-Guy?

Click, click.

It was so cold, it was as if the world had frozen over. It was as if the coldness had seeped into the very vestiges of his soul, sending sharp chills running down his spine.

Click, click.

"Hello Harrison." The Shadowy Figure spoke in a surprisingly normal voice, though something about him just gave Harry the creeps.

Click, click.

"Who are you?" Harry asked, bravely trying to ignore the numb horror he could feel growing within himself. Who was this guy? Why did it feel as if he was in the presence of something so horrifying? It was only one guy...

Click, click.

Harry finally took notice of the soft clicking, in the Shadowy Figure's hand was a lighter, a silvery, metal lighter.

Click, click.

It had a lid, which the man flicked open and closed at an almost mechanical beat.

Click, click.

"You know me..." His voice was but a gentle whisper, but the vibe he radiated was anything but comforting.

Click, click.

"No, sorry sir, but I don't-" Harry cut off his own words and sniffed the air, smoke?

The Shadowy figure shifted, he wore a cloak, almost exactly like Cloak-Guy's. The man's upper part of his face was obscured by the shadows cast by the black hood. He smiled, revealing his unnaturally sharp white teeth, they weren't pointed but they had, unnaturally sharp edges to them.

Click, click.

Suddenly, Harry didn't want to see the man's face.

He wanted out, he wanted to be with his sister, Helena, and Shiloh, Scott and Freedom.

Anywhere but here.

Click, click.

Suddenly it was as if the very air was heavy, why couldn't, why couldn't he heave another breath from his lungs?

Click, click.

Whatever air made its way into his throat, felt like sheaves of sharp glass panes raking their way down into his chest.

He was panicking, he could hear fire, he could smell it everywhere, Harry had smelt fire from the fireplace before, it was nothing like this. It was everywhere, but he couldn't see it.

Click, click.

"You know me..." The stranger repeated monotonously.

Click, click.

"No I don't!" Harry gasped out as he found himself short of breath.

Click, click.

"YOUknow ME..." Suddenly the stranger was a huge shadow, a huge blanket of a cold and empty abyss, and it swallowed Harry up. Darker than the darkness already surrounding them, the air thick and stagnant like thick steel wool.

Click, click.

Then everything shattered.

End Dream Sequence...

OOOOOOOOO

Everything was blurry at first, everything tinged with a mesmerizing red tinge...

Black air rising.

Harry was vaguely aware of Valerius curled around his shoulders and neck, Garren barking ahead of him,

Everything hazed over, like a bad dream...

He wanted to move, but, his limbs felt heavy, he just wanted to sleep...

Something tugged on his arm, yanking him forward.

There was yelling in the background, he looked up, white hair...

It was Helena, yelling at him. What was she saying? Harry just couldn't make it out, everything was muffled.

Then there was a quiet sizzling...

Out of the corner of his eye, down the hallway they'd just come down, Harry could see a large cylinder with a small flame symbol on it...

Suddenly, they were both lifted up and yanked into a closet along with Shiloh, Garren, Aisu and Rogue. Scott shoved a bunch of towels at the bottom of the doorway. What was-?

BOOM!

A loud, deafening explosion was followed by a rush of heat. The flames were nothing but a dull roar to Harry's disoriented mind.

The door was thrown open, flames licked the walls and covered the floor before them. But Scott ran forward, keeping Shiloh and Helena running close behind.

Down the hall, Harry felt as if the world was spinning. It was so difficult to breathe...

He blinked slowly, twice...

BOOM!

Then there was a second explosion, Harry opened his eyes, to see the rush of fire that filled the hallway. Coming to burn them, to kill them, to devour them...

Harry blinked again.

Suddenly they were outside, the cool night air was like a drink of cool water as opposed to the oppressive heat of the burning wood and plaster.

Another blink.

They turned back to face the building, Scott helped Harry stand up on his unsteady feet.

Blink.

Another blast of heat assaulted them, like a gust of harsh wind.

ROOOOOOARRRR!

Harry's eyes snapped open.

Before them, towered a hulking figure. It stood on four legs as thick as tree trunks, huge paws spread out showing it huge claws, its head was clearly wolf-like.

Wolf-like was more the word, its great jaws opened too far back, with huge teeth longer than either of Harry's arms.

And to top it all off? The entire beast was made out of flame, jumping, leaping, violent flames.

It stood before them in the parking lot, turning the black concrete to a blackened tar as the heat melted it, the nearby cars nothing but masses of melting lumps in the mere fiery aura the beast radiated.

It's huge fiery tail lashed, as it roared again.

Garren had his ears back, growling.

Aisu screeched out harsh, horribly out-of-tune, notes of anger into the air as she flapped her wings violently.

Rogue had grown to her tiger-size and roared back.

Valerius was silent, yet oddly tense around Harry's shoulders.

Then flames were thrown their way, a huge, ball of flames that screamed with the vengeance of hell.

It ended up forcing them all to scatter...

Then Harry found himself alone, then the beast turned in his direction.

Then Harry made mistake, he froze.

The Fire Monster gave another bellowing roar, that made the ground beneath Harry's feet tremble.

Then Harry made a second mistake, he looked into the monster's eyes.

Despite the heat of the flames, from both the Beast and the burning building, Harry felt everything go cold.

Looking into those eyes was like looking into a great, bottomless abyss. Falling, it was like he was falling into that abyss, as if he'd never be able to get back out...

Suddenly it dawned on Harry. Like a bolt of lightning, looking into that thing's eyes, he knew-

Harry knew, without an ounce of doubt, that he was going to die...

RRRRWWWWOOOOOOOAAAARRRRR!

The Beast's deep bellow sent a wave of heat in all directions, knocking Harry right off his feet.

A sharp pain shot through Harry head as he felt it make contact with something solid.

Everything grew hazy again, he blinked.

He wanted to call his magic, but, he just, couldn't.

A single step, and the fiery Beast had Harry within what Harry supposed was its range of fire, it opened its mouth and Harry could see something like a red, fiery abyss as its throat.

The heat gathered at the Beast's maw...

Harry could hear everyone yelling, running to him...

Harry blinked once more, a figure in mid-air...

It was Helena, black fur grown all the up to her mid-biceps, claws morphed. She had climbed onto one of the few, non-melted cars, and jumped.

Her right arm was cocked back as if she was about to punch, but her claws were out.

Harry could see something vague, a vague outline, of a blackish air enveloping half her arm...

This whole thing occurred in barely a few seconds.

Gunshots rang out, signaling what Harry could only assume was Freedom's arrival...

Then Helena struck, what's more the Beast had held its head particularly low, she hit him alright.

Right in the eye.

In less than a second the Beast recoiled with a screeching bellow, a whip of flame lashed out and sent Helena flying in the other direction as it staggered back, howling in pain.

Helena hit one of the few, un-melted cars, on the other side of the lot, the car crumpled at the impact.

Harry saw blood, her blood, his sister's blood, dripping down her forehead at her sides...

The others rushed to her, picking her up gently. Freedom rushed to Harry, guns drawn and trained at the dazed, flaming behemoth.

Then, despite the clenching fear that clawed at his stomach, Harry felt a certain kind of cold rage bloom within.

How dare this son of a bitch hurt his sister? How dare it give them yet another exhausting thing to deal with? Wasn't all the fucking shit that had happened over the past few days enough?

Suddenly, it didn't even occur to Harry that he couldn't even levitate a cup for more than a minute, or that he could only make tiny electroshocks, or that he was only a tiny five-year old, he just wanted one thing now.

'As Helena would've said,' Harry thought as he viscerally digging for his magic, 'I am going to KILL this motherfucking son of a bitch.'

A/N: Okay yeah, typing this one took FOREVER! I had to fend off six plotbunnies to write this. Then I had to delete a WHOLE SECTION (about four pages worth) and write it, AGAIN. Anyways, eating delicious vegetable fritters had gotten me back on track, and before you veggie haters go all 'eewwww, gross', the only two veggies it has is shredded carrot and sweet potato(or radish), the rest is bean

sprouts, shrimp flour, salad shrimp and anything else you want, then its fried. It is one of the best snacks ever! My Mom and Grandma are from the Philippines, so they both know how to make it, I think it's called Ukoy. Good food always makes me happy... Okay, anyways, just some reassurance to you all, I never said that Helena was dead, so don't anyone get their panties in a twist okay? Yeah, Harry's cussing, now I don't want anyone up in my grill about how five-year olds can't cuss like that. Helena cusses like that due to her hearing a lot of it from other people, she cusses more than frequently, thus Harry HAS to have picked up SOMETHING, if not from the people Helena picked it up from, then FROM Helena cussing on an almost DAILY BASIS!

Oh yeah, and nobody get up in my grill about the whole Helena making an unrealistic jump, it will be explained in the next chapter, so don't anybody have a cow.

And don't anyone complain about everyone 'not doing anything to help' because they were, and besides three of them are five and one is ten, and despite all the crap they've had to go through in their short lives, they are still kids. They are still prone to fear and freezing up in the presence of danger. And as you can plainly see, Freedom has arrived on the scene, but bullets don't do much against a Fire Monster that MELTS metal, now does it?

This chapter just goes to show us all that the heroes never get a break, and there's always gonna be someone out there who wants ta kill 'em.

Oh yeah, if anyone cares, yesterday I watched the movie "Kick Ass" it was in a word, Awesome-sauce! Hit Girl and Big Daddy were my favorite characters! Red Mist was a bitch-tard. Kick Ass was sort of okay, by he just couldn't compete with a little eleven-year old girl who could literally shoot the crap out of all those mobster assholes. I cried during the movie, for reasons I won't disclose for those fans that haven't seen the movie yet, I won't ruin it for you. If you people like guns, explosions, some blood, aren't squeamish about heavy cussing, heavy violence, and eleven-year olds who can kick more ass than a professional can, then this is the movie for you!

Okay, anyways, no flames accepted. Positive reviews that tell me what you think of the character and the situations they are facing, I would love some constructive criticism and ways to improve my

writing, and I won't protest if you have questions either. PLEASE REVIEW!

NOTE: Oh yeah, a little note, anyone notice that my villains have a little something in common. Can anyone guess? (Don't worry, I give my villains backstories too, they wouldn't be complete character without them...)

AGAIN?: Okay, well, rant of the day, check, no flames warning, check, asking for reviews, check... Okay that about covers it, please review! Oh wait I said that already... Back to fending off the Darkwing Duck plotbunnies running around my head for me... Oh well, PEACE OUT! (moonwalks in mid-air) ;)

Chapter 36: Travel Chronicles: End of the Beginning

Helena's POV...

I was angry, terrified and overall exhausted. Instead of waking up well-rested and ready for a new day, I'd woken up to the scent of smoke clouding my new, heightened senses.

Freedom had told me a few things about my new form, those scientists had injected me with an experimental serum that was specifically designed to change my DNA(Freedom took a while to explain what those were). But she also told me that I'd have heightened senses, such as better hearing, sight and smell.

The only things that didn't go away was the odd control over my old and new jaw muscles and the extra eyelids. The fact that I keep accidentally unhinging my jaw, annoys me to no end. But the morphing of my claws seemed to be connected with my emotions, so the need to stay calm was a given. Unfortunately for me, all the stress, the lack of good sleep, and all the excitement that kept going on kind of made that, really, really, freaking hard to do.

But the monster made of fire? The giant beast of hellfire that took up about a third of the parking lot, plus the fact that it was like thirty feet tall not including the head? It spat fireballs for crying out loud! And that thing wants to roast us!

Oh, did I mention how it almost did roast us?

We all ran to one side, or at least Shiloh, Scott and I did. The animals took off, and stood next to our little posse minus Harry and Valerius.

Harry was far away, and the flaming monster turned to face him.

Everything went blurry after that, I dashed forward on all fours, instinctually I felt my old protectiveness for the only person who understood me.

My little brother Harry is in danger.

The little bright spot in my life, I won't let that die. The one thing that keeps me from closing up, from giving...

'Magic...'

Black fur began to sprout on the skin of my arms...

'if you can hear me...'

My nails sharpened, and my bones shifted a bit uncomfortably as they formed larger claws.

'if you'll listen...'

Halfway there, I'm too far away to grab my brother, but....

'I need you now more than ever...'

The monster's closer, I dash forward, towards an unmelted car.

'Help me...'

I hop up onto the hood of the car...

'Help me...'

Another hop, I'm on the car roof... I leap...

'HELP me...'

I never even knew that I could jump this high, the monster's holding its head low, growling... My magic won't answer...

'GOD DAMMIT, HELP ME!'

Flash of black and purple, white edges... I'm right in front of this thing's eye, the sheer amount of heat in the air makes me wonder if Hell even gets this hot... And with all the might I stab my new claws forward...

....!

Pain, searing, white-hot pain... It hurts worse than any beating from those monsters I call relatives...

In the span of less than two second, my entire body feels as if it was being incinerated from the inside out, then in an instant I go numb for a few brief milliseconds...

I can vaguely hear the monster screaming in pain and fury, hah, take that you son of a bitch...

Suddenly, pain lashes across a diagonal line from across my stomach, up and curling around my left shoulder, I'm flying...

WHAM!

Impact... Something crumples behind me, and I hear something shatter...

As my world fades, I hear a whispery voice murmuring sadly in a 'tsk, tsk' kind of tone...

"Such a pity... We haven't had one of these since... -rever..."

Then, darkness...

OOOOOOOOOOOO

Outside, with everyone else...

Freedom was in a serious situation, also very illogical... A monster made completely of fire? Really?

Bullets did absolutely nothing to it, making her next to useless. Retreating? That thing would probably mow down everything in its path, so that was definitely not an option...

Then the Girl, as Freedom thought of her, did something absolutely stupid. She half-morphed, jumped up and slashed then thing right in the eye.

If Freedom wasn't so used to observing everything she saw, she would've missed the wave of black- white tinged aura that surrounded the attacking arm for the briefest of moments before hitting the monstrosity right in the eye.

It had sent her flying, Freedom's acute hearing picked up the sound of cracking and shattering bones as Helena was smashed into the side of a car. The car crumpled with a screeching crunch as metal and glass contorted and squeezed together.

Freedom's mind was working at a million miles an hour, she thought of her observation again...

'Energy.' She thought quickly, 'Palpable energy is needed to punch through its near-incorporeal form.'

This entire train of thought, observation included, occurred in less than three seconds.

Freedom was well aware of the Dathe running at an alarming speed towards the children, who'd gathered at the crumpled car where Helena's bleeding form lay.

Freedom wrote her off almost immediately, that kid was a goner. Mutant or not, Freedom couldn't have even tracked her as she flew through the air from the monster, to the car. That kind of impact would've broken every bone in her body, skull included, and ruptured pretty much every single one of her vital organs.

Freedom felt her seldom present emotions spike a little, after all that, one of the kids just... Goes and dies?

'But doesn't life suck like that...' Freedom thought as her eyes searched the destroyed parking lot for something, anything to take this thing down, before Scarhead did something stupid too.

Then she saw it, a tangle of broken and torn electrical wires and broken and or fallen telephone poles. In less time than it took to blink, a plan had already formulated within her mind.

Tucking both handguns into their respective holsters, Freedom sprinted forward...

'Operation: S.W.S. is a go...' A small part of Freedom's mind said randomly.

She really hoped that this would work, because otherwise... Well, in short, it was a screwy deal for everyone involved, except for the

giant flaming monster of course. Failure would spell disaster for everyone, no pressure.

Not really...

But really, who was she kidding?

OOOOOOOOOOO

With M. Dathe...

'Chocolate bunnies! No, no, no! Focus!' For the first time in years Maugrim Dathe was fighting against the warm, fuzzy embrace of his half-insanity. He needed to focus, he was trying to clear the fluffy pirkle (pink + purple) clouds that blanketed his mind.

Operating on instinct, he kneeled forward and let his hands hover a few inches over the injured child's chest and torso before him. He was aware of the other two children staring solemnly.

A soft grayish blue glow emitted from his hands as a 3-D picture formed within his mind's eye. Her insides were a mess, but her heart wasn't in too bad of a shape...

It was still beating, albeit faintly, he could save her.

Drain blood from the lungs, knit the lungs closed, re-inflate...

Draw stomach acids, mixed with blood, into the stomach, close it.

Fix arteries, fix the ribs and close up the liver, fix the limbs the shoulders...

Check for brain damage, fix the cracked skull...

Re-aligning the spine without damaging the nerves...

Now there was the matter of the first degree burns and the ruined skin. Channeling more magic through his palms, he set to work on healing the exposed blood vessels and removing the patches of ruined skin and regrowing them. But her nerves, fixing those were really tricky, one wrong connection could either be harmless, or send the entirety of her bodily functions, into chaos.

Then the brown-haired man realized something, the kid's pulse was to slow, same with her heartbeat... All that magic, all that healing, this was actually his best work in a long time, and his patient was going to die from blood loss.

'Not on my- CHERRY PIE! –watch.' He thought as he swiped a streak of blood across an array design on his belt. Within a half-moment, a small, white, pill bottle materialized into his bloodied hand.

"What're you doing?" The older boy eyed his suspiciously as he switched views between Dathe and the monster. Honestly, that boy will give himself whiplash if he keeps that up...

Acting fast Dathe took out a dark, crimson red pill and shoved it down the little girl's throat.

'Geez, I'm seriously out of practice... That's bad, eight years as a field medic and I almost let my patient bled to death?' He mentally berated himself.

'All that's left is to- PONIES! –wait.' He really had to stop taking those pills, they made him less sane than he was usually...

"Is she gonna be okay?" Shiloh asked, as if unaware of the mega-danger they were in.

"She's safe to move, all you can do is- COWABUNGA!" Dathe yelled, a sudden rush of adrenaline flooding his system, he jumped up and dashed towards the monster whilst screaming. "EVIL VON FLUFFYPANTS, BY MY SCALPEL YOU SHALL MEET THY DOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!"

Everyone except the monster, sweatdropped.

Scott peeled Helena out of the remains of the car, Shiloh knew that as far as everything goes, everyone was useless in this situation, even the animals...

He felt useless, and at the moment, he hated himself for it...

OOOOOOOOOOOO

With Harry...

Freedom had distracted the monster...

Harry tried zapping and threw one shot of electricity at it. It would have been an impressive feat for a five-year old, if it hadn't fallen short by about fifteen meters.

Somehow, the monster ignored Harry in favor of chasing Freedom as she made as much noise as possible.

Harry was suddenly aware of someone grabbing him around the waist and hoisting him up. He panicked, and gripped the offending arm, tightly.

The muscle tensed and jerked spasmodically, Harry looked behind him, it was Scott. He let go, realizing that he was electrocuting his friend, apologizing as the older boy dropped Harry back on his feet before the keeling over in a twitchy heap.

"Sorry Scott!" Harry apologized for the fifth time as he, with the help of Garren tried to help the ten-year old back onto his feet.

"Sss- s'ooo- k-k- kaaayyy..." Scott said shakily as his muscles twitched involuntarily.

Shiloh rejoined them, with Helena's arm slung over his shoulder. The kid was out of breath, and Helena was practically deadweight as he tried to carry her carefully.

"Guys..." Shiloh was taking deep, gasping breaths, he was not used to running with this much weight. "What about that?" He pointed at the flaming behemoth whom was currently distracted by the stranger and Freedom.

Though the stranger seemed to be really pissing it off...

"In -n -n, th- this si- situ- k- case," Scott stuttered out, "w- we're n-nex- tttt tah use- l- less."

Harry clenched his fists angrily, and stared at his sister's unconscious form. He'd never felt so useless in all of his life, he hated it.

What use was an ability when it did nothing to help you or the people you cared about? What was its purpose really?

Then they turned around, only to see a literal wall of flames about three meters behind them. Harry, Scott and Shiloh looked around, to see that the entire lot, smashed building included, was surrounded by a wall of red-hot flames.

They were completely boxed in, and on a little side note it was getting a little tough to breathe...

Because for the life of him his, 'powers' weren't here. Before they were just, there, he never had to call them or anything but now... It was as if they didn't even exist...

OOOOOOOOO

With Freedom and M. Dathe...

Okay, now the idiot was endangering his own life. How the hell was he getting so close to that thing without getting half the skin on his body burnt to a crisp?

She had to resist the urge to let her jaw drop when the fiery behemoth smacked him aside, sent him flying into the ground at, at least, fifty kilometers per hour, on his head. Then the guy just jumps up and dances, waving his scalpels at the beast.

That guy was inhuman, nobody could survive that without becoming a blood n' bones pancake. What the hell was this guy?

The Ice Bird, Aisu, was circling the monster's head, icy wind coming off her wings in gusts. But she could never wander too close, as her feathers would singe and start to disintegrate.

"Hey!" Freedom called out, though the roar of the flames surrounding them... Crap, that meant even less time to take this thing out...

No choice in the matter either, either win or die.

'But that's what everything in life boils down to ain't it?' Freedom thought hollowly.

"Hey Sharpshooter!" Dathe was running next to her, damn, how can anything be that fast?

"What?" Freedom responded flatly.

"I have some liquid nitrogen on me," Dathe brandished the tank with exaggerated enthusiasm, almost hitting her. "I figure, I throw, you shoot it. How's about it?"

"RRRRRRROOOOOOOWW WARRRRRRRRGGGHHH RRR!"

"On another note, are you havin' as much fun as I am?" Dathe added in a sing-song voice.

Freedom's left eye began to twitch.

"Fine." She said to him before rolling onto the hard, broken up concrete to avoid yet another blast of fire. Yes, the monster had grown even more pissed off, and had upgraded from fireballs to fire blasts.

She dodged through the fallen telephone poles, and the monster followed, tangling into the wires as the electricity coursed through its semi-corporeal form.

"AND HERE'S THE PITCH!" Dathe yelled as he tossed the tank.

It started to melt, one shot at this...

And with the expertise of a professional sniper, Freedom drew both handguns and started shooting, three solid shots...

BOOOOSH! SHHRREEEEEEERRRRRKKKKHH!

Surprising how much liquid nitrogen you could cram into a single tank container...

The combined effects of the electrical wires(though most of them were melted now) sending electricity coursing through that thing's body, and the icy explosion of liquid nitrogen froze part of its head.

The beast screeched and tossed its head wildly in attempt to scrape the offending material encasing less than half of its huge head.

'Wait a minute,' thought Freedom as she observed the flaming beast thrash about, 'it's solid-'

Suddenly a pair of arms came around her middle and lifted her into the air with surprising ease, basically scaring the crap out of her.

"Finish it off! –FROSTED FLAKES!" It was Dathe, Freedom's instincts were screaming on the attack. But unfortunately, Dathe had already tossed her straight up... Thirty meters, straight up...

Freedom could see the thrashing beast destroy what was left of the building... But the ice was melting, fast.

That could only mean more crap for them...

Shit, its turning around, the kids!

"Start shootin', Sharpshooter! That ice won't last- MORE THAN GOOD THEIR GRRRRRRREAT! –forever!" Dathe called out, and if Freedom senses weren't as trained as they were she would've never heard him.

'Aim for the head.' Freedom started her descent, falling, and gaining speed.

The kids would never get out of the way in time...

'I'm probably gonna die...'

Freedom straightened her body, the less air resistance the better the aim...

'But at least...'

She cocked her guns...

'For once in my life...'

Freedom aimed as best she could, at its half-frozen forehead, as she had lost her glasses during her ascent.

'I'm doing something...'

Halfway to the ground, almost level with the Fire Beast's thrashing head...

'Worth doing.'

She pulled the triggers, and gunshots rang into the air.

The ground rushed quicker than Freedom would've liked, and she closed her eyes...

... A few more seconds...?...

A pair of arms had caught her, completely absorbing all that momentum and impact. Freedom opened her icy, blue eyes to stare up at a quickly-becoming-familiar scarred face of one Maugrim Dathe.

"RHHHEREEEEEEEEEAAAARGHHH!"

The monster gave a pained roar as it had stumbled and skidded forward, right towards the kids with the animals. Whom had been dodging the stray shots, with a few burns, but they were all alive...

And the Fire Beast had skidded to a stop, right in front of the kids as it let its head drop, it gave a pitiful roarish whine and then it died. And its flames went out slowly, until all that remained was a burnt out dog-like skeleton the size of... A really, really, really big elephant...

A few more seconds and Freedom had regained her bearings, she literally jumped out of his arms and landed on her shaky legs, thus she ended up kneeling about a meter away instead.

Freedom eyed the scarred man suspiciously, the guy was inhuman, and he was helping them for seemingly no reason...

Freedom just wouldn't buy it.

"You okay?" Dathe said in a slightly more sober tone.

Freedom didn't answer, then was buried beneath a pile of children as they all glomped her.

"Freedom you're alive!" Shiloh and Harry cried out joyfully.

"That was n- nuts" Scott said.

"What happened to you?" Dathe asked him.

"Cloak-Guy?" Harry asked in surprise.

"That's what you guys call me? Cloak-Guy? Seriously?" Dathe stuck out his tongue childishly.

"You were..." Harry said, then Freedom noticed the not-dead form of Helena in Scott's arms.

"AWESOME!" Scott and Shiloh finished.

"Is Helena alright?" Freedom checked her over quickly, finding no sign of her wounds except a faint scar that twisted up and around from her right arm up to her shoulder and blood on her clothes.

Freedom took her from Scott's arms and sighed, "we've got to get out of here. I can already hear the sirens..."

Then, as if they're luck couldn't get any worse, it started drizzling.

"Didn't you park the car here?" Harry asked as he walked next to the already fleeing the scene adults.

"No." Freedom answered in a flat monotone. "You guys are so lucky that I was too paranoid to park the car in the same place where we were staying."

They didn't know the half of it. Freedom knew that, by civilian standards, she would be considered paranoid. But hell, that so-called paranoia has kept her from dying hundreds of times, turning

close-brushes with death into life experiences to learn from.

So they left the parking lot, Freedom keeping a sharp, suspicious eye on Dathe as they walked on. The animals trailed behind them, the smell of singed fur and feathers in the air behind the group.

Harry hissed quietly to Valerius, what they were speaking about, would remain a mystery...

OOOOOOOO

Half An Hour of Walking Later...

"Geez," Mumbled Scott, "how far away did you park?"

"Far enough that if the car was found, we wouldn't have been ten minutes away from being shot full of lead." Freedom stated calmly.

"Yeah because being burnt to a crisp is so much better right?" Scott was a bit snappy, everyone was due to their lack of sleep.

The animals were very tense, Rogue didn't even have the energy to antagonize Garren. Aisu lay out flat on Garren's back, her use of icy wind gusts had exhausted her, she didn't even care that her flight feathers were dragging on the concrete sidewalk.

"Watch your mouth, I might just leave you here." Freedom gave him a hard look, Scott promptly shut up.

They finally got to the car, Freedom had parked it near a twenty-four hour diner. Everyone piled in, the kids and animals in the back, adults in the front, and drove off. In less than ten minutes, Harry, Shiloh, Scott, Garren, Aisu, Rogue and Valerius were all just as unconscious as Helena, sleeping.

Freedom felt a small warmth bloom in her chest, a very, very, very tiny warmth, but a warmth none the less and the corner of her mouth twitched.

"Hold up!" Dathe said suddenly, he just remembered something, "I just remembered why I wanted to find ya'!!!"

Freedom raised an eyebrow at him tiredly as she concentrated on staying awake and focusing on the road ahead of them.

"That whole place was a trap!" Dathe exclaimed dramatically.

"What do you know?" Freedom could sense that she wasn't going to like the answer to this one.

"Well, there's this... Do you know about the magic?" Dathe asked suddenly, breaking off his train of thought.

Freedom saw no point in bluffing as it would do nothing but leave her in a state of confusion later on so she was truthful, "somewhat, the siblings back there," she jerked her head towards the sleeping children, "come from some kind of 'Wizarding World.'"

"Do ya believe them?" Dathe questioned.

"Why shouldn't I? I've seen mutants, robots, and harnessed mental energy, so why not? There's a lot of weird shit in this universe." The woman answered plainly.

"I'm not sure what the undertones of that statement are, so I'm just gonna ignore 'em." Dathe's cheery yet eerie smile, "none the less, you've got a lot more ta worry 'bout than jus' bein' found by Crytex."

A suspicious look, "how so?" Freedom took a right turn onto the highway.

"Who do you think set up the whole thing back there?" Dathe said pointedly, "the whole mess just stinks of Malus."

"Malus?" Freedom questioned.

"I know, pretentious right?" Dathe rambled.

"I'm not fluent in Latin." Freedom deadpanned.

"It's the adjective for evil." Dathe explained, "but that guy is a seriously evil wizard, who inhabits a stolen corpse of someone he killed."

"Seriously?"

"Yes," Dathe's expression grew a little more serious, "and for some reason he's picked his targets, besides the rest of the world of course."

Freedom stared at the sleeping kids in the rearview mirror, "them?"

"Unfortunately."

"Why are you telling me this?" Freedom cocked an eyebrow again, questioningly.

"Because, well... I've been doing some observing, not stalking per say on Crytex... Surprisingly, you're probably one of the only living sane one there." Dathe said, a slight expression of disbelief crossed Freedom's face. "Seriously, I mean it, all the others who've tried what you've accomplished are either insane and or dying experiments, been completely brainwashed, or are plant fertilizer if you know what I mean."

"So explain this... Malus guy. What does he want? Money? Power? World-Domination? W-" Freedom asked.

"Nope." Dathe answered airily, "I've fought the guy hundreds of times in my life... And I still can't draw any conclusions 'cept that he just likes to mess with people and destroy as many lives as possible. He's a disease that won't die, living in a stolen body."

"Sto- ... -len body?" Freedom said slowly.

"Yeah, the guy had attained ultimate-universal power and in a last desperate attempt to thwart him after he was all kinds of shit powerful, I sealed the spirit into my best friends' corpse which was fifty years dead and applied a power cap..." Dathe paused to breathe, and at Freedom's incredulous look he added, "I magically preserved it, anyways, a few fights later I decide that life sucks, the world's in ruins, and thought, 'oh well, I got nothin' to lose so cowabunga dude.' And I went time traveling."

"Time traveling... Really..." Freedom was officially weirded out for the day, she was torn between believing the guy or just dropping him into the nearest looney bin and driving away...

"Okay, I know, I know, you're thinking that the scarred loon is a complete crazy... Well, let's face it, I have a history of mental trauma already, mental problems, and issues with the human race in general... But, I figure that telling the truth is a lot simpler than hiding it and building up a cover-story. Normally I would, but you strike me as a naturally very paranoid person, therefore you will be naturally suspicious of me and will search for any sort of discrepancy within my 'story.' And when you find one, you'll most likely tie me up and interrogate me without shying away from the use of torture if need be. Am I right?" Dathe explained in a slightly subdued manner, "and I'll completely understand if you drop me off at the next looney bin and drive off, I won't hold it against you if you do."

Freedom was silently surprised that he had just given an accurate description of what she considered the safest and most logical course of action for her to take should Dathe have shown even an inkling of being a threat.

But for some reason, for all Freedom's much practiced and honed ability to read people, she could sense no lie. Could he really be? Nah.

"Look I don't necessarily believe you," Started Freedom with a reserved expression as she stopped at the red stoplight, "but you haven't given me a solid reason that you mean us any harm..."

"Well in that case-" Dathe started with another eerie grin.

"You'll be under probation, you give me any reason to be more suspicious than I already am or that you're lying to me, I don't care how indestructable you can be-" Freedom said.

"Re-inforced bone structure." Dathe explained while cutting her off, "I'm only half-human."

"I don't give a damn, you could be the freaking tooth fairy for all I care," Freedom let her expression grow even colder for intimidation purposes, "but I will still kill you, should you turn out to be some lying lowlife trying to get free ride through life. If you travel with us, you pull your own weight, got it?" Freedom's expression didn't change.

"You got yourself a deal, I give you a good, solid reason to believe that I'm untrustworthy, you kill me. Got it." Dathe nodded vigorously.

Freedom sighed, this was going to be a long trip, "Okay, I want a short list of what your capable of, your skills, abilities, etcetera. I also want more information on this Malus guy." Freedom paused for a moment then added, "also I want you to know that I still don't believe you about this time traveling junk you're talking about. Capiche?"

"Crystal!" Dathe nodded enthusiastically, "I can heal with mana energy, I have a re-inforced bone structure, I'm an expert on what the magical government in the U.K. consider 'dark' rituals, forty-seven and a half languages but half of them aren't human languages, I'm also stronger than most humans..." Dathe paused briefly before adding, "oh yeah, I'm also good with curses, medieval style weaponry and ice elemental related battle magic."

"I'll want a demonstration of your so-called magical expertise the-" Freedom was cut off by watching him form a ball of pure cold energy within his palms... Not to mention that it was growing bigger by the second. "Not in here you moron!"

Dathe cut the energy flow off, and it dissipated.

"Later then." Dathe said to no-one in particular.

"I would love to say that I know about half the things you're talking about, but unfortunately I don't so start explaining because we have all night-" Freedom cut herself off at the sounds of the kids shifting as they woke up slowly.

Freedom's expression softened slightly, barely even noticeable to the naked eye.

"Freed?" Harry muttered sleepily.

"Hm?" Freedom replied curtly.

"We were useless out there weren't we?" Harry said while looking at his sleeping sister.

"Pretty much kiddo." Dathe said with a slightly encouraging smile, "but your-"

"Yes," Freedom stated coldly, "you were all absolutely useless back there."

Harry's expression took on an even gloomier state at her words.

"Geez way to harsh the mellow there Derricks." Dathe muttered half to her and half to himself.

"It's the truth, no need to sugar-coat it." Freedom stated in her usual cold monotone.

"I hate being useless," It was Shiloh's voice now as he rubbed his eyes sleepily, "I couldn't do anything."

Freedom heard Scott sigh guiltily.

"I don't wanna be useless! And Helena would agree if she was 'wake!" Harry declared passionately, the animals viewed the scene with a veiled interest as they pretended to sleep.

"Me neither." Scott and Shiloh said in tandem.

"And how would you go about that?" Freedom had her doubts about them, sure they were tough little anklebiters, but how far could they go without her really?

"Train us." The three boys intoned together.

...

That certainly threw Freedom for a loop, in the rearview mirror she raised an eyebrow at them questioningly.

"Really." Harry said, "we want you to teach us."

"What exactly?" Freedom wasn't sure she liked where this was going.

"Anything you have to offer," Scott said seriously, "how to fight, knowledge, anything."

"Teach us." Harry added with an imploring look on his face.

All was silent for a long while, nothing but the noise of the cars around them and the town they were driving through...

"Do you understand what you are asking for?" Freedom questioned Harry in particular stoically.

"What do ya mean?" Harry asked.

"Should I agree, training under me is no walk in the park. You learn from me, you'll work and train until your bones break, your bodies will numb with exhaustion and you will most likely hate me before all is said and done." Freedom's voice was serious and steady, "I will push your limits every chance I get and your best will never be good enough. You will not slack off, because there is no room for laziness on this unit, you slack off, you're on your own. So, do you still want it?" Freedom's small speech echoed through the boys' heads and they looked at each other, then nodded.

"Yes, we're su-" They all started before Freedom cut them off.

"Short, curt answers only. No unnecessary babbling." Freedom said in a slightly harsher tone.

"Yes." The boys said, they looked at each other, at the change in her tone... They had the feeling that they may have swallowed a bit more than they could chew...

"Sleep, next stop isn't for eighty kilometers, the week following will be the your first taste of the misery camp you've signed yourselves up for." Freedom stated curtly.

Determinedly, the boys went back to sleep. Within each of their own respective minds, they resolved to meet whatever challenge the stoic woman could throw at them head on...

Dathe observed Freedom quietly, when she agreed to train them did she look, dare he think it, sad?

"Forgive me if I'm prying, but did you look sad just a moment ago?" Dathe asked while tilting his head slightly.

"No." Freedom denied it, she didn't feel. She wasn't supposed to, she wasn't a fan of using people but it was a necessity. The less deadweight those kids became the more chances of Crytex not being able to find and kill them all. Somehow, she felt a bit like dissappointed or maybe something else... She wasn't sure of what that heavy feeling in her chest was. Those kids had just signed away what was truly left of their childhood innocence or naivete, by the time she was finished with them they will have seen horrors that only the world they lived in was capable of.

Freedom knew she was no parent, she was a soldier first and foremost with no cause to serve but her own, and even that she was not sure about. She would never mother them, she would teach those kids how to survive in the worst of predicaments. By the time Freedom was finished with them...

'They'll be soldiers...' Freedom thought tonelessly.

She viewed them in the rearview mirror again, they were all sleeping soundly. Freedom was already going through lesson plans, nutritional objectives, training regimes and the like in her head. But she questioned herself still...

'Are they strong enough for this?' Freedom half-wondered to herself and she turned the car to go down the exit.

They slept on, Dathe was napping too.

Freedom coldly crushed the welling hope in her chest as she drove the car on. It was better not to hope, it was better to not hope for something that could set you up for dissappointment. She would train and teach them, should they falter and break... Then that was their problem... They asked for it...

But Freedom couldn't help but secretly feel that, for some reason, she wanted them to succeed. As she would be their teacher, why shouldn't she? But...

Freedom knew that she could, would never be as cruel as her own teacher had been. Though she thought the world of her teacher, her sister and mother-figure in all but blood, T.Q.00700529 was the most cruel and harsh teacher Freedom had even had. Her teacher had ripped out everything that was a weakness, including emotions

and the showing of it... Though she hadn't been completely successful on the first part. Freedom had had most of her childhood beaten out of her, and it mostly involved her being shot and left to drag her own sorry, bleeding body to the infirmary. Freedom knew that her teacher had been cruel, but that teacher made her strong.

Freedom could never subject those kids to the atrocities that her teacher, her mentor, had subjected her to as a child, both mental, emotional and physically abusive.

But, that made her job harder... Freedom had to push them farther than they could ever go on their own, their best would never be enough because they could, would be better.

Freedom silenced her thoughts as they started to spin erratically throughout her brain...

She looked at them through the rearview mirror again...

Freedom could only hope they'd be strong, and that they'd never break as often...

And in the end, Freedom still knew that deep down she wanted them to succeed and surpass her expectations...

But all she could find herself hoping, praying to God or anyone that would listen almost, that they wouldn't break the way she did...

Yet somewhere, deep inside, Freedom made a promise.

'You will succeed, you will be strong, you will all live... You won't die because...'

Freedom's gaze softened slightly.

'I won't let you...'

A/N: Whew! I thought I'd never finish this chapter, originally this was going to be split up into two chapter, but then I decided to just put 'em together. This is, I think, the longest chappie I've ever written for this fanfic. If people were wondering why I took an entire AGE to write and post this thing it's because somewhere along the line I got a review asking when this fic was gonna end and I'm like TT_TT and

it put some serious harshing on my mellow. Geez, I'm pouring out my heart and soul into what I think may be my best work to you people and all I get is a 'when's this thing gonna be over?' I sat somewhere in Emo-land for several hours thanks to that... Also, please forgive me if the fight scene was choppy and kinda hard to follow if not completely crappy... I can't do fight scenes very well, sighs... Yeah, Dathe is a time traveler, I won't give the details cause that would spoil you all but his backstory is interesting to say the least. I hope I fleshed out some of Freedom's character well for you guys, thank you to all my faithful readers and reviewers. Please gimme feedback cause I wanna know what you THINK about it. Also, I know people want the twins to reunite with their family, don't worry eventually they will, but they have a lot of growing up to do before that happens and a lot of other things to face so be patient with me, I have finals coming up and I gotta study my physics like mad. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO ATTEND ANOTHER PHYSICS CLASS FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR! I have to pass and I'm stressing like a crazy! I've never been more scared in my life...

If anyone is wondering how the monster was killed by several bullets when the thing was made of flames. The liquid nitrogen froze the part of it head, [plus the electricity coursing through it cause it was tangled in some power wires(though they were burning/melting)], thus rending it tangible and 'harmable' and exposing the Fire Beast to physical attacks such as ten bullets to the head. And actually, the flames make the thing look bigger than it actually was so its actually not as huge as the description made it seem.

Anyways, I'm a little woozy right now, and my teeth hurt like hell... I just got my last two molars pulled today, not more tooth pulling, YAY! Anyways, gotta go eat some soup, can't eat solids without hurting like a bitch... See ya'll later, please REVIEW!

CLICK DA DARNED REVIEW BUTTON RIGHT THERE! REVIEW PLZ! =)

Chapter 37: Growth Chronicles: Lesson Plans

Freedom sighed, two nights and she was taking micronaps...

"CAR!" Dathe yelled out.

Freedom jerked awake and yanked the wheel to straighten the car, barely avoiding a collision with another vehicle. Drivers all around honked their horns loudly, further dragging Freedom's awareness into partially unwilling consciousness.

An hour later, they had switched off of the highway and onto an obviously underused country road. A shortcut, or so Freedom said.

Dathe was saying something... Freedom's sleep-deprived brain just didn't have the oxygen to spend on comprehending what he was saying...

"Pull over." Dathe said with what seemed like a uncharictaristically flat tone of voice.

"Hm?" Freedom mumbled unintelligibly, her medium length hair falling over her eyes.

"Park the car." Dathe said, they were on a wooded road so no traffic hold ups.

"Why?" Freedom forced her eyes open once again, attempting to concentrate on the road ahead.

"I want to live. Pull over." Dathe looked into Freedom's eyes pointedly.

"Mrrrrgghh... No." Freedom applied more pressure to the gas pedal.

Dathe's left eye twitched, "I said, pull over."

"How's about no?" Freedom snapped irritably in reply.

"Pull over before I make you." Dathe said in a deadly quiet voice.

"We still have a flight to book, Crytex tracking us and a hundred and seventy-two miles to go before the nearest secure airport." Freedom answered tonelessly.

"Doesn't matter, you need sleep and I may have a reinforced skeletal structure, but I certainly do not wish to spend at least forty-thousand navitagrams on fixing the sheer amount of fractures on fixing all of your crushed and or broken bones alone, much less if the kids and animals get hurt too when this metal deathtrap crashes." Dathe said seriously.

"Navitagram? Freedom said with a raised eyebrow.

Dathe felt like knocking the irritatingly paranoid woman out cold. "A single navitagram is equal to three zeptograms cubed of magical energy. It's a measurement of raw, visible energy, now pull over."

"No." Freedom said flatly.

Dathe sighed, "fine, but for the record," Freedom turned gaze at him in her own emotionless version of alarm. "I don't like doing this very often."

The car slowed down as a seemingly invisible force seemed to apply pressure to the brake pedal and make the gas pedal stop working. Soon, the car had been slowed then put in park on the side of the road, emergency brake included.

"Hey!" A suddenly irate Freedom protested, though it sounded weak at best due to the lack of sleep and the bags under her eyes.

"No, you listen here. I get it, you don't trust me, fine. But hell, I do not wanna fix the broken bones this certain situation will lead up to! I already spent most of my safely available energy fixing the kid, and you need sleep to function properly. So either we sit here, waste gas, and let you sleep, or, you let me drive so you can sleep without killing us!" Dathe said stalwartly.

Freedom's tired blue eyes met his in a silent glaring/staring contest until she smirked slightly.

Well, the guy did just give her a little weakness about himself... Nuts or not, he didn't seem like all that bad of a guy...

Freedom suspected that it was probably the lack of sleep talking, but she felt that maybe the guy really didn't mean them any harm... He hadn't told a lie to her yet, and she was pretty much an expert by experience at reading people.

And she was truly and expert at that.

Well, what was one more limb to go out on going to hurt?

Though Freedom never got enough of it, sleep, she knew that it helped the healing process greatly. A good few hours of it would do her wounds and her state of mind a world of good. But...

But then, somewhere on her sixth sense or something like that, she felt energy flare into the air around them.

The car slowed, the right turning signal clicked for a few brief moments, and the wheel turned by itself and steered the car into the grass as it came to a gentle stop. The kids did not stir from there slumber, and neither did the animals.

"How'd you do that?" Freedom asked skeptically, though some part of her already knew the answer.

"Magic." Dathe answered simply.

Freedom sighed, and mentally prayed to... Well, whatever would listen, that this wouldn't blow up in her face...

"Fine, you take the wheel." Freedom conceded tiredly.

Dathe grinned with an endearingly eerie smile, like a small, mentally disturbed child when given candy or a butcher knife, as he got out of the car to switch seats. Freedom switched seats from the inside, ignoring the twinges of pain that echoed in her torso and upper bicep. She was used to pain, hell, Freedom could barely remember a time when she wasn't in any pain.

And they were on the road... Again.

OOOOOOO

Later...

As it turned out, Dathe was a pretty good driver. They hadn't run into a single cop yet...

Then Freedom learned that she'd slept for several hours, it was the best sleep she'd had in her entire life... Hell, the kids had to wake her up for God sakes.

Why had they stopped? Because it was 8 A.M. and the kids and animals were hungry, and frankly, so was Freedom...

They'd stopped at a small family restaurant, with outside tables. Unfortunately, Aisu could not be let out of the car for obvious reasons that Shiloh took ten minutes to explain to her to get the large bird to willingly stay where she wouldn't be spotted.

Helena had finally woken up, and joined the meal too.

The kids talked and whispered amongst themselves, the boys filling Helena in on what she'd missed. Her expression was quite reserved for a child her age, Freedom noticed. The boys, all three of them, had asked to be trained by her, logically speaking if Helena had been awake at the time she would've most likely made that request as well.

When they ordered food, Freedom made sure their orders had all of the proper nutritional needs of children their age. Then she also had to take into account that they were all underfed and underweight, they needed to reach a healthy amount of weight before they could begin proper training.

Freedom sighed as she took another small bit of her chicken salad sandwich, she would be a teacher, no, a mentor again. Hell, she would have not just a student, she would have students, plural.

Freedom had had a total of two students in her entire life, both ending in what could only be described as two unmitigated disasters.

The brunette sighed as she watched the children devour their respective meals with gusto, along with the scarred man that was Dathe. Dathe, Freedom observed, could pack food away like

nobody's business. He'd already eaten five sandwiches, with everything on them it was almost scary the way he finished the food in front of him, he paid for his own food. At least the man paid for his own meal if he was going to pig out.

Freedom observed Helena approach her quietly. The white-haired girl's eyes had this quiet sort of luke-warm look in them.

Helena stopped right in next to Freedom and looked up at her.

'Observing me,' Freedom thought with slight approval, 'judging if I'm a threat or not. Smart kid.' With that thought Freedom raised an eyebrow in a questioning gesture.

"Would you teach me as well?" Helena asked politely, as she looked up, her eyes finally mirroring that of a young girl's rather than one who's had to grow up too fast, kind of like Freedom herself.

"Are you sure that's what you want?" Freedom questioned without much expression.

"Yeah, I wanna be able to pr- protect my bro, and my new friends." Helena answered seriously.

"Then yes." Freedom said before picking up the other sandwich half. Helena's mouth quirked up in a lopsided sort of grin, and she launched back into conversation with Harry, Shiloh and Scott.

Freedom began to compile the data she'd gathered from observing the kids, mental profiles as Freedom thought of them. Observations, which data could be derived, which led to hypotheses, then plans of testing... Everything, well, almost everything in life could be easier solved with the scientific method, Freedom knew it well.

She was thankful that Harry and Helena weren't too depressed about the loss of their two stuffed animals... Back in the fire anyways... Freedom wasn't good with that kind of thing because she just truly couldn't understand it emotionally. Emotions and expressions of them in relation to circumstances just weren't her forte.

She had plans to make, training schedules to outline, balance and finalize, nutritional and educational plans as well... Then there was

the matter of teaching social graces, or 'spying graces' as Freedom called them.

That would be especially difficult for Freedom because as far as interacting with civilians, she stuck out. She only knew what to do and say when she had an agenda, information to weasel out, people to 'convince' AKA: manipulate(only when she had to of course). But most civilians tended to use emotional reactions in response to their surrounding circumstances instead of the efficient logic Freedom was comfortable with. Freedom didn't want the kids to have that kind of impairment, or experience the kind of discomfort she herself felt when pretending to be a bubbly civilian or an understandingly gently librarian, etcetera.

In other words, Freedom had a lot of work to do...

'Okay,' Freedom thought clinically, then she began to catalogue the five people before her...

Maugrim Dathe, he wouldn't be Freedom's student but she assumed that she would be stuck working and traveling with him for a while. Half human, or so he claimed, with possible extensive surgical knowledge if the way he fought was anything to go by. Supernatural abilities, coupled with the fact that from Freedom's limited observations the man was most likely insane made him very unpredictable. But from what Freedom could conclude about him, he was an asset. Better an asset than another enemy, as long as he didn't endanger the rest of them she could put up with his outlandish behavior for the sake of the group.

Helena Potter, five year old mutant, most likely to have increased strength, endurance and agility with the proper training. Take into account her obvious loyalty to her younger twin brother, which acted as a good emotional grounding point. Her stoic and, possibly mature attitude could not be completely defined without more observation, but her personality wasn't all that difficult to read. As far as Freedom was concerned, she had just as much potential as the rest of the kids.

Harrison Potter wasn't nearly as cheery as Shiloh, but held this... Freedom could only describe it as a strong aura, oddly comforting. He also had some heaven(or hell)-sent gift of luck, Freedom hadn't even known the kids for that long and she already saw that. As

much as Freedom's mind balked at the idea she assumed that she would need Dathe's assistance. Because as far as supernatural abilities went, which Freedom knew she couldn't help him very much in that particular subject, he seemed to have an affinity for electricity.

'Perhaps something in mechanics or computers would suit him,' Freedom thought as she took another bite of her sandwich.

Shiloh, former human experiment of Crytex. Almost completely ignorant of most social norms and society in general, yet despite everything his general outlook on life could be taken as naïve and overtly cheerful. But Freedom knew better, he knew the horrors people could commit and he was well-aware of the danger that dogged their little group's heels. But he helped keep the others in high spirits so it wasn't all that useless. Oddly enough, he sometimes gave off the same aura, or feeling, that Dathe gave off, only Shiloh's was a little softer, less broken. Freedom made a mental note to look into that later when they were safe from their pursuers. With his water/ice ability should it be trained properly, as Dathe had commented loudly upon while the kids were sleeping, Shiloh would always have a weapon present.

Nathaniel S. Comhnall, orphan, born werewolf, ten years old. Freedom surmised that with the right diet and exercise regime, he could develop a decent amount of lean muscle. With enhanced strength, speed, senses and trained endurance and strategy, Scott could be truly formidable opponent in hand-to-hand combat. With senses like his, as Dathe had explained a lot of stuff to her about the magic, magical creatures, and the magical world in general, Freedom also thought of Scott's potential as a tracker.

As far as the animals went, Garren could be trained as an attack dog. Aisu could teleport only short distances, but with the cold that seemed to emanate off the bird, Freedom could tell that Aisu was more than she seemed. Rouge was self-explanatory with that size change ability. Even Harry's snake was obviously magical in nature, with venom to match.

A bunch of kids with a wide array of special abilities, each one had to be honed to perfection alongside everything else Freedom had in mind for them. There was weapons handling, hand-to-hand combat, strategy in both social situations and combat, languages, histories, and a million other things Freedom wanted them to learn.

At the very least, they could all read. So Freedom had something to work with at least.

And as they all piled into the car once again, with Dathe at the wheel. Freedom's thoughts worked in overdrive, planning the group's next moves and the kids' 'education'.

She sighed mentally, not letting a single expression reach her face or eyes, it would be a tough road ahead, for all of them.

Freedom knew that time wasted meant- Well, the thought was way too violent... She made Dathe stop at a bookstore where she purchased several books on several subjects for the kids to read.

It was a long road ahead...

Oddly enough the kids were devouring the books she gave them, showing each other the pictures and captions...

Dathe turned on the radio and began to hum along as the song, 'This Time' by Alisan & Ilsey began to play.

'But even I'll admit,' Freedom thought with an upward twitch of her lips, 'I think that, just this once...'

When we're standin' alone,

With no direction, you wanna go home

And we give up on the truth, you're answer is dark

But the question's burning, ya put up a spark

Cause the end is comin'

Why do we make it so hard?

When we have each other there's nothin' we can't stop ,

This time, we're gonna make it work,

This time, nothin' can stop us,

We try to roll it along but, it's our time, this time.

This time, nothin' can hold us down,

This time, we'll fight and we'll win somehow,

We fall, but pickin' each other up, cause it's our time, this time.

Leave your arms in the air,

Have you given up, are you ready to run?

With no-one to turn to you feel alone,

With desire burnin', it's time to believe,

and all that's left is love.

So why do we make it so hard?

When we have each other there's nothin' we can't stop!

This time we're gonna make it work,

This time nothin' can stop us,

We try to roll it along but, it's our time,

This time.

This time, nothin' can hold us down,

This time, we'll fight and we'll win somehow,

We fall, but pickin' each other up, cause it's our time,

This time.

Trying to believe,

All we ever need,

is right here beside us, all along

Maybe we could see,

It was meant to be,

When love is all around us!

This time! Nothin' can hold us down!

This time! We'll fight and we'll win somehow!

We fall, but pickin' each other up,

Cuz' it's our time,

This time.

This tiiiiiii- me.

Oooooohhh- whoo-ohhh...

Cheesy and too optimistic as it sounded to Freedom...

'I think this'll work,' Freedom quashed the urge to smirk, 'I think we're gonna make it.'

And they drove on in relative silence, getting ever closer to their destination. The start of what would could only be described as the rest of their lives...

A/N: OMG! That took so long for me to type! Don't nag me about the song's cheesiness in relation to Freedom's uncharacteristically cheesy thoughts at the end there okay? The song, 'This Time', belongs to Alisan & Ilsey who sang the song as a soundtrack for the movie, 'Secrets of the Mountain'. Sorry for taking so long to update, my laptop's Microsoft Word Trial expired and I was in Maine. There was not internet within twenty miles of me. The nearest internet connection was in Machias, at a Dunkin Doughnuts. So due to circumstances mostly beyond my control I took a vacation from writing, and now my ideas are flowing better. Did you know that Stephen King still passes through Maine?

Anyways, I'm sorry I took so long, I'll try to have the next chapter up as quickly as I can after this chap gets some reviews. Please leave REVIEWZ! And critiques and suggestions are welcome, flames will be used to roast Twilight books(sorry I'm a basher) and Edward.

On another unrelated note, who's gonna watch the 'Vampires Suck' movie? I certainly am! =)

Anyways, my muse is glaring at me for rambling too much, and- Ow! Hey leggo of my ear! (struggles)

ROSE: What have I told you about rambling? (drags me away by the ear)

ME: Anyways, PLEASE REVIEW!

CLANG!

ME: Ow! (rubs head in pain) What was that for! (glares at Rose)

ROSE: (readies frying pan again)

ME: Okay, I'll be quiet.

ROSE: (smiles triumphantly)

ME: (looks around shiftily) PLEASE REVIEW YA'!! (leaps up and runs away while ranting incessantly)

ROSE: (anime eyebrow ticks and chases me around and into the sunset with the frying pan)

SADIE: (sighs) Why am I always stuck with these two morons? -_-;

Chapter 38: Growth Chronicles: Of Trains and Pursuers

Icy eyes observed their surroundings coldly, as crowds bustled all around, hurrying along, paying their vehicle no mind.

Beforehand, Freedom had already made the decisions needed. She had finally caught some sleep on the way to the airport, and mentally laid out several escape plans.

They wouldn't expect it, the kids, Dathe, or their pursuers...

After parking the car, Freedom made sure that the kids had their respective backpacks. Securing her own was of no difficulty, she turned to Dathe. Noticing that his small messengers bag, the stoic brunette raised an eyebrow. He was wearing the cloak again...

"Oh yeah," Dathe scratched the back of his head awkwardly, "no cloak, right." He gave a little laugh as he removed his cloak, folded it and put it in his bag.

He was dressed in dark green cargo pants with a black muscle t-shirt. Freedom observed that by civilian standards, emotionally driven and ruled as they were, he could've been considered quite handsome if not for the scars that riddled his face.

'How shallow.' Freedom scoffed mentally, before quickly turning her attention back to the task at hand.

Helena held Garren's by his new leash, which they had purchased along with some other necessities. Rogue meowed unhappily inside her carrier as Harry toted it carefully.

Aisu was another matter entirely, it was been near impossible to hide a white bird of no scientifically recorded species. So they had to get a large bird carrier and pin a sheet over it, Dathe insisted that he carry her.

Freedom shushed Shiloh as he looked like he was about to comment.

"Freedom?" Harry, Scott and Shiloh questioned gently. Helena remained silent, as if sensing that Freedom had something to say.

'She's perceptive of people,' Freedom thought approvingly, 'observant, protective, it'll serve her well in the future...'

"We're not taking the flight." Freedom said as she walked past, motioning them to follow.

"Why not?" Scott asked in a confused tone. Even Dathe stared at Freedom briefly in surprise, she had only said that they had to take the flight, like several times...

"There's a train station a short walk away," Freedom said as the children and arguably insane man followed her out of the multi-level parking lot.

"But why-?" Harry started.

"Because," Freedom interrupted him quietly, "if we park there all they gotta do is ask around and check the schedules. They'll find us, if we do that then we'd be better off dead, end of story."

No-one argued with that logic, even the five year olds could understand the implications. The all walked in relative silence.

For a relatively short walk, it turned out to be nerve-wracking. After they had switched cars at a rest stop(not legally exactly), Freedom had woken the kids up and had them all fed dinner, their final meal before they left the safety of the car.

She'd told them to be on their guard, because anyone and everyone as far as they were concerned, could've been their pursuers. They were being chased by dangerous, nasty people who'd stop at nothing to lock them up and worse.

Harry shivered nervously, he hadn't thought about it 'til now, but, one wrong move... On little slip up could spell the end for them... His sister, his new friends... They could die... They would die...

A gentle, but firm hand on his shoulder made him jump with a small yelp of surprise. Harry looked up to the hand's owner, and stared into the blank, icy stare of Freedom's eyes.

"Kid," She muttered softly into his ear as they all walked on, "relax, if you're going to be tense, do it with your mind, not your body. I can't

guarantee anything but I can promise that we have high chances of pulling this off without a hitch, just do what I say, when I tell you to do it." Freedom looked at Harry seriously as she looked straight into his big green eyes.

"Mmhmm." Harry jerked his head up and down in agreement, clenching his fist tightly around the handle of Rogue's carrier.

"Relax. Look calm." Freedom ordered as she straightened herself, standing up to her full height. As if slipping into a completely different persona, she looked like a regular tourist.

Harry did his best, attempting to stop himself from shaking. Soon his shoulders gave only small twitches, as they arrived in front of the train station. Freedom's words had offered the possibility of failure, with horrible consequences, but he'd seen her fight.

He'd seen her face that huge flaming monster, with no hope of victory. But thought a damn stroke of luck, they all survived anyways. She stayed up later and longer than anyone, and always seemed to plan their next move, making sure that they were all clean and well-fed and it had only been a few days. Her expressions were few and far between, her monotone voice only changing when giving orders or other small instances. When they were walking or eating, she would smile and make expressions as to not look odd or out of place, but Harry could tell, the expression had reached her eyes, yet... It wasn't real, she was truly a master of disguise.

And Cloak Gu- 'no, Dathe,' Harry corrected himself mentally, had just, appeared... Just in the nick of time, to save Helena, the fight the flaming monster, and save Helena from certain death. The man seemed... Unstable, maybe a bit off his rocker but... Somehow, Harry could tell that the scarred man meant well...

And there was something else too, Dathe, as he refused to be called mister, smiled... A lot... But despite every smile, it was like, something, deep inside, was broken... Broken beyond repair...

Scott was nice, but when they weren't reading the books Freedom had bought them, he had this faraway look that showed that Scott just wasn't there. Harry could tell that he was still sad over the wolfman's death. Out of nowhere, while they had been between driving stops, Harry had given him a hug.

Flashback...

"Why're ya hugging me?" Scott looked at the smaller boy oddly.

"You look sad," Harry answered simply, it was the easiest question in the world, "so I'm doing what Helena did when I was sad or hurtin'."

Scott said nothing, but he didn't protest. He winced as the healing welts on his back burned slightly, but he did nothing to remove the littler boy from his personal space.

'It's kinda nice,' Thought the young werewolf, 'bein' hugged...'

End Flashback...

Harry remembered his older sister doing the same for him when he was said, or they'd gotten an especially painful beating from the Dursleys.

Shiloh was something, weird, spazzy, but genuine. He meant what he said, and hadn't told Harry a single lie yet... As far as Harry knew anyway. Shiloh idolized the ground that Freedom walked on, he had nothing but praises to sing about her. Shiloh, for the short amount of time Harry had known him, which wasn't very long by the way, wanted everyone to be happy. Always asking Helena if she felt okay or Freedom if she was hurting...

Harry shook his head a little, turning his focus back on the real world, Freedom had already bought the tickets. The train would get in soon, then it would be smooth sailing from there...

There we're no animals allowed, So Garren had been the only problem. But Freedom had found a way around it too, she put sunglasses on Helena and Dathe used magic to create a seeing-eye-dog's harness. Helena would be doing a blind man's bluff.

/Sssssnakeling,/ Valerius spoke up next to Harry's ear urgently, /I sssssmell ffffirepowwwwderrrr/

/Valerius, that's Freedom's/ Harry answered as quietly as possible.

/Not hersssss ssssnakeling,/ Valerius hissed back with sarcasm, /there'ssss a group of male humanssss, ssssseveral ssssnakelengthssss away. Sssssss, they reek offfff it./

Harry tried to turn his head to see only to be stopped by a sudden pain in his right wrist as Valerius had squeezed it painfully.

/Hey, what was that for?/ Harry hissed to his reptile companion as he rub his wrist gingerly, realizing that, for a small snake, Valerius had some powerful muscles.

/Don'ttt look ssssnakeling,/ Valerius hissed in reprimand, /you'll alert them, tell Nest Mother./

Harry gave a bare nod, before getting up and situating himself right between Helena and Freedom. Harry knew some of Valerius's lingo now, he always referred to Freedom as the 'Nest Mother' and Harry and the rest of the kids as 'snakelings'.

"Freedom," Harry whispered quietly to the woman, her eyes' focus zeroed in on him without even so much as turning her head. Her gaze the only inclination that she was listening to the small five year old. "Valerius smells gunpowder on the guys over there."

Freedom took in her surroundings once again, and saw them.

Them.

Armed to the teeth beneath their winter coats as snow fell around them and the cold December air bit at every inch of exposed skin. Freedom knew them well because, well, she had been one of them... A hunter, a killer with orders plain and simple.

She knew how they worked.

Plain looking nothing about the group of four would indicate any difference or uniqueness from the rest of the crowd, if not for one thing... One tiny detail...

A face, of the single most person Freedom never wanted to see... The one person she never wanted to face, for as long as she had started this whole crazy crusade...

Her former student and team partner, former friend-gone-backstabber, TECH-801, Mason.

And their worst nightmare...

A/N: Sorry it's short! I was in a hurry to finish this one, you guys deserve another good update after I took so long with the last chapter. DUN! DUN! DUUUUUN! EVIL CLIFFIE! MWAHHHAHAHAH! No flames on my birthday! (Though I updated it late, computer crashed and internet is being ebil... sniffles) Anyways, please reviews all I ask for my birthday are REVIEWZ! Thank you all, please tell me what you all think of the story so far and how it's going, please don't say it's 'too slow'. I for one, HATE giant-sized timeskips, they make me feel like I missed out on an entrée or something...

NOTE: TECH-801(Mason) is NOT to be confused with TECH 802 whom was mentioned/described in chapter 16.

Yes, in the story it is December, a lot of things have happened in a short amount of time and I AM crap at giving proper renditions of time passage, I'm still doing my best and trying not to confuse you all... If I have I'm sorry, if you see any inconsistencies please point them out and I'll edit them as soon as I can.

On an unrelated note, who saw 'Nanny McPhee Returns' or 'Vampires Suck'? I did, 'Vampires Suck' had me and my cousin laughing so hard that we got headaches when we went home. The 'It's Raining Men' scene was hilarious...

(Only people who've seen the movie will get this) WHAM! "Team Jacob, bitch!"

-bursts out LMAOing-

'Nanny McPhee Returns' makes me think that, no matter how old you get, appreciate great parents while you've got 'em, made me miss my Dad and stuff... (may he rest in peace)

Please have a wonderful day ya'll! WOOOOOHOOOO! PLZ REVIEW!

HOORAAAY FOR COOKIE CAKES AND REVIEWZ! (skips away
merrily)

Chapter 39: Growth Chronicles: Trains and Past Failures

Freedom mind worked in overdrive, she refused to let panic set in...

'How'd they get here before us?' Was the one reigning question on the woman's mind, before she made herself focus on the task at hand.

That task? Getting the hell out of there a-live and unseen. But that, was easier said than done.

The only weapons Freedom had to work with was one H&S USP Compact and an extra magazine. Not a lot to work with really, but it was better than nothing. Besides, maybe TECH-801 had forgotten what she looked like...

Oh who was she kidding, they may not know who exactly they were looking for, but one glance at Freedom's face and they'd b nothing but a button click and a phone call away.

Thinking of the microchips beneath her skin unnerved the brunette more than she cared to think about. The fact that if someone recognized her, she was literally a few keyboards clicks away from being found. Steeling herself, Freedom remembered her plan, from its beginning...

Her initial escape plan had been thought out carefully, back in its early, preparatory stages Freedom had brushed up on her hacking skills. Hacking the company mainframe from the UK Facility, was no easy feat, but she had succeeded. The brunette woman had found her own file and moved it, as far as the worker files went, she was officially dead. To cover her tracks, she'd dumped a heapload of viruses and malware into the central main frame and scrambled several hundred files along the way.

But now? All of that could've been for nil.

Freedom mentally sighed, this just wasn't her day.

Icy eyes picked out her enemies in the crowd, TECH-801 accompanied by what looked like three Gun Ops agents. Freedom could tell that they were with him by the way they crowded around him...

Gun Ops agents' were part of Crytex's soldier unit, like security guards and scouts. But unlike the normal soldier unit, they were much more dangerous. Well-versed in hand-to-hand combat, stealth, firearms and infiltration, a Gun Ops agent is everything a civilian isn't, strong, agile, obedient and efficient.

The Gun Ops squads were what Crytex sent in when they wanted specific people to disappear. A single squad comprised of four members, a team leader, a sniper, an interrogator, and a medical expert. Each member was fully capable of holding their own in a fight, but due to the organization of the teams it allows for the agents to specialize.

Team Leader's were especially important, besides compiling reports for mission files, they coordinated everything. You only got assigned as Team Leader to a Gun Ops squad if you were the strongest, and deadliest soldier. And today, TECH-801 was that soldier.

TECH-801 had been Freedom's trainee, she'd mentored him and trained him after MOX-027. MOX-027 had died first, on an infiltration mission in the US. After that, Freedom had been especially difficult on TECH-801, she'd trained him harder than she ever had MOX-027, and ended up turning him into one of the most dangerous spy-soldiers to grace the ranks of Crytex.

One grade-A backstabber.

He'd risen through the ranks, until he'd ascended beyond guard and infiltration-scout duty, he'd gone to the top...

She had been proud of him that day... Back when she'd been nothing but a number, back when Freedom had been known as TECH-224...

Flashback...

A year.

It had been a whole year to the day...

Since the death of TECH-224's first trainee, Michael.

Freedom had been too easy on him. In attempt to be a less cruel teacher, TECH-224 hadn't pushed MOX-027 hard enough in his training and desensitization. Then when they'd been assigned training missions, he'd died because he'd hesitated, giving him enough time to be hit with a spray of scatter-fire bullets.

She'd spoilt him, by going too easy on him, and now he'd paid for it, with his life...

Come the next trainee she was given, she never let up on him. Every childish notion, broken and kicked out of him, he became one of the most efficient guardsmen of all the other trainees in his Serial batch.

His name was TECH-801, the day Freedom had watched him take her place... His methods, rather ruthless, without care for what he smashed or stepped on along the way. Including Freedom herself...

In all honestly she had never been able to shake that feeling of betrayal ever since he left her to die by chaining her to a live bomb...

But for some reason she could never shake off the pride she felt when he got promoted to a Gun Ops...

End Flashback...

In situations like the one she was face with today, now her perfect student was going to kill her...

"Keep them safe." The brunette woman muttered to Dathe, she didn't want to trust him so soon but... She had no choice...

'Oh well,' thought Freedom idly as she slipped on a beanie, something to cover her hair. She walked past him, praying to any deity that would listen, that this would work. 'Here goes nothing...'

"Red rings sighted, train to Paris." Freedom muttered, she knew, this was a gamble. But the call out must've been sent out to all factions in Europe by now, every agent would be on the lookout for them. Posing as an informant was child's play...

Discreetly, TECH-801 smirked and nodded.

'Yes little one, take the bait.' Freedom's expression remained impassive, due to years of experience.

They went in the opposite direction, Freedom could see Dathe leading the children into the train up ahead...

Maybe this wouldn't escalate into a fire fight...

Freedom's body automatically began to trail after the highly dangerous assassins, she knew, they'd never stop hunting them. That team was one of the highest performing Gun Ops squads in existence, spend the rest of their lives being hunted by TECH-801 and his squad of sycophants?

Not in Freedom's list of things to be done.

Not today at least, today Freedom would rid the world of another problem...

Her self-preservation just hoped that she wouldn't die in doing so...

OOOOOO

With the Kids...

"Where's Freedom?" Shiloh asked Mr. Dathe as the tall man herded them aboard the train, his murky green eyes flashing worriedly.

"She'll be along soon." Mr. Dathe answered as he showed the attendant their tickets. "Freedom's just tying up some loose ends..."

More than a few minutes passed, and the train announced its imminent departure.

Helena was suspicious now, where was Freedom?

Harry looked nervous, he knew, something was wrong...

And despite the loud bustle of people and background noise, everything seemed unnervingly silent...

The train lurched forward, they were leaving the station...

Ten seconds-

BOOM!

And a deafening explosion rang in the air...

Gunshots rang throughout the air, screams of confused and terrified people...

But the train was already leaving, speeding up in fact, too late to stop...

Why wasn't Freedom there?

Then Harry noticed that their entire train car was empty, not a soul inside other than themselves...

Then the gunshots faded into the distance, the station long behind them...

It was unsettling, was Freedom-?

Click, click... BANG!

Then suddenly a bruised and bleeding Freedom dropped into the train car from the roof hatch, and crumpled into a heap on the floor...

"Nice entrance." Mr. Dathe commented as he helped the shorter brunette sit up, not missing a beat.

"Shut up." Freedom moved to stand, only to be forced back into a sitting position by the tall man.

"Ah, ah," Mr. Dathe smiled unnervingly, "no moving for you, I have to play Doctor again."

Freedom looked like she was about to say something, but then thought better of it, and didn't struggle.

She'd been hit by several glancing shots on her upper left arm, and had a bloody right shoulder due to a rather large bullet burying itself in there.

Other than a few other cuts and bruises, the gunshot wounds were the worst of her injuries.

"I thought you were an expert at these things." Mr. Dathe teased as he removed the bullet from her shoulder with a pair of tweezers.

"Shut up." Freedom felt her cheeks burn a bit, despite her hard-won ability to show no emotion.

"You okay Freedom?" Harry questioned timidly.

"I'm injured, tired, and bruised like hell. So no, I'm not okay," Freedom remarked sarcastically, "don't ask stupid questions, 'are you okay' is one of them. And another thing,"

"What?" Harry asked, as his eyes met the cold steel of Freedom's.

"Never be timid when asking a question." Freedom seemed to be talking to all four of the worried children.

Then Mr. Dathe poked Freedom's ribs, specifically her older injuries.

"Hey! Watch it!" Freedom snapped at the eerie man.

The eerie man in question smiled warmly, albeit scarily, at her and chuckled. Then the four children began to laugh as well.

Freedom huffed, she didn't see what was so funny...

She took a small amount of comfort in planning the children's future training regime, and assured of the fact that she was going to push them until they cried...

Just because she never expressed her emotions very often, didn't mean she didn't feel them...

She just preferred, logical standpoints, cold, hard facts...

But still, Freedom snickered inwardly somewhere deep inside, she indulged herself every once in a while...

She looked at Dathe, well maybe she could learn to trust the man, though it would take a while. And the four children before her, unquestionable wells of potential, just waiting to be tapped and refined.

Freedom had failed her only two students already...

She wouldn't make that mistake again...

Their laughter stopped, and they badgered the blue-eyed woman for the details of what went down just a few minutes ago...

Then again, maybe they wouldn't need as much saving...

Then Shiloh fell over, landing on his head...

Okay, maybe that last part was just a wishful fancy on Freedom's part...

A/N: Okay, that XTREMENISH bastard just put me in a very bad mood this morning... Anyways, I suppose you guys should thank that son-of-a-(really long string of cuss words) for flaming, cause otherwise I wouldn't have been galvanized to update this fanfic. Sorry it took forever, please review.

YESSS! I FINALLY finished the Growth Chronicles! GET READY FOR A TIME SKIP! WOOOOOO! (not a huge one, but it's a time skip, be happy, I REALLY hate time skips... Grumbles)

REVIEW!

Chapter 40: Squad Chronicles: Of Bullet Shells and Coughing Spells

From that train ride they'd ended up making a giant go-round and passed through several cities by train and by bus.

Eventually, when they all had some privacy and the time, Dathe began to teach the children and Freedom about magic and the magical world. They still remembered the short, yet epically hilarious conversation that occurred between Freedom and Dathe only a few subjects in...

OOOOO

Flashback...

"Apparation is a form of wizarding travel, it's like teleportation..." The man explained cheerfully.

"Then why didn't you teleport us when oh I don't know," Freedom actually being comfortable enough to show her deadpan sarcasm had been a sign of her relaxing, slightly, "when we were almost shot to death?"

Dathe flushed nervously, "not exactly my forte."

"What happened to mister, 'Master of Magicks'?" Freedom stated apathetically.

"Of my areas of expertise," Dathe clarified, rubbing the back of his head in an embarrassed manner, "which are elemental magic, common and obscure rituals, healing, making my medication, magizooology, and the study of nature spirits, otherwise known to humans as 'Demons'. Humans haven't met true demons, and those crawl within their own... Sorry, rambling..." Dathe apologized.

"Demons?" Freedom's face showed no emotion, save for a raised eyebrow.

"No, what humans label as 'Demons'," Dathe answered, "they're not really spirits per say either, they actual descended from them though, and they are almost completely unknown to Wizards."

"Almost completely?"

"Yeah," Dathe's flush of embarrassment seemed to die down, "turns out, usually the known ones are the crazy ones who liked to go on destructive rampages back in the day. Nowadays, they prefer quiet, maybe occasionally scaring up a few superstitious locals every now and again..."

"So what about real demons?" Freedom asked curiously.

"Oh," Dathe seemed to shiver, "those guys are, far more subtle. Downright nasty wouldn't even begin to describe the levels of downright hell they embody."

"That bad?"

"Worse." Dathe looked fearful, "realize that, Hell is a very real place, it stretches through every universe and bleeds it's evil into the worlds around it. So yeah, they're that bad."

"You would know because?" Freedom allowed a look of curiosity to appear on her face.

"Magical mishaps," Dathe said before chugging down on a very small bottle that seemed to appear out of his cloak, "pissing off several high-ranking demons, several adventures that scarred me for life, mentally, physically and possibly gave me permanent post-traumatic-stress disorder, but other than that almost everyone came out alive..."

Then Dathe's face took on a look of thoughtful guilt...

Sensing that it was a touchy subject they were breaching, Freedom changed the subject. "So this apparition thing, you can't do it?"

"No, I end up splinching." Dathe's expression changed immediately to one of excitement.

"Splinching?" Freedom wondered aloud.

"Leaving behind body parts, could be an ear, a finger or half your leg..." Dathe's face screwed up into a thoughtful expression, "heck I think I used to kill people with my faulty side-long apparition..."

Freedom looked at him blankly.

"Sorry, side-long apparition is when someone apparates with someone else, usually when I did it, I wouldn't splinch, but the passenger would... Horribly..."

"Dare I ask how badly?" Freedom rolled her eyes.

"Well, I've had decapitations, dismemberments, and once I'd only apparated with the guy's upper body, everything else from the waist down had been left in Missouri." Dathe explained plainly, while turning the page of a book, "but then again, there was that one time I got to the destination with a lady, unfortunately, we left all of her internal organs behind somewhere in Romania..."

Freedom looked at him very calmly, taking in his story much more differently than anyone else would have...

Besides, the sheer amount of guilt that seemed to haunt Dathe's eyes, Freedom could identify with.

"Mind telling me about me being of so-called magi-zoological descent?" Freedom went back to the question that had hung over her mind since her miracle of a scream that had happened while escaping the Crytex facility.

"Well there is a kind of ritual I could do so we could find out for sure..." Dathe said half to Freedom, half to himself, "but I think that for sure you're descended from some sort of shifting totem spirit."

"Totems?" Freedom raised an eyebrow in question.

"Yeah," Dathe said sniffing the air, "and you my dear smell like a grizzly bear."

"Bear?"

"Yeah, so about me teaching you how to use your magic..." Dathe sauntered up next to the blue-eyed woman craftily without her noticing...

"How do I know you won't trick me into blowing myself up?" Freedom looked at the man suspiciously.

"You can't really tell can you?" Dathe smiled, then his expression changed again, "though since we're being upfront here, I must warn you that I'm bipolar and am possibly a manic depressive."

"Anything else?" Freedom prodded with her own deadpan sarcasm.

"Brought down from the sky by extraterrestrials?" Dathe offered.

"Really?" Freedom couldn't suppress the look of shock from flitting across her features.

Dathe was silent for a moment, then burst out laughing.

"What?" Freedom scowled at the green-eyed man.

"C- can't..." Dathe gasped out between gales of laughter, "b- believe you fell for that!"

Then Dathe fell out of his café chair, taking a bowl of tomato soup with him, thankfully the bowl had been made of cheap plastic.

And waiters and customers alike, stopped to stare at the tomato soup covered man who lay on the floor laughing his ass off.

Freedom just smacked her forehead...

End Flashback...

OOOOO

Honestly, the man drove Freedom absolutely bonkers. His tendency to go off tangent made Freedom want to just smack him over the head, which she almost did on several occasions.

Dathe had even explained about totem animals, being descended from one was really rare. The whole thing with her sonic scream had been the first manifestation of some kind of magically enhanced roar, which was a signature attack of a grizzly totem.

Then Dathe went on about how Shiloh was half-whatever too like the tall man was, and how Shiloh would grow into his elemental abilities with training.

They never stayed in one place long enough to actually get in the physical conditioning that Freedom wanted them to start drilling the children on, so Freedom had bought them training weights to start on at a physical fitness shop.

Dathe was having the time of his life in several herb shops, along with those occult shops, according to Dathe almost all of the stuff was crap, but the ingredients were useful.

Freedom would just give him her usual deadpan look.

Watching the children was a full-time job in Freedom's opinion, as far as trying to teach them while moving around the country? That was difficult.

As far as Freedom was concerned, there was just no time nor room to properly teach them how to fight. So she decided to work on their education, which, based on her own, would be considered unofficial.

But that worked to their advantage, no-one would expect them to learn these kind of things at their ages...

So far, Freedom had taken a leaf out of the school system, which she viewed as horribly flawed by the way, and started them on the basics.

Thus far all of them knew their numbers, and letters, and shapes and had at least a fifth grade reading level. But it was seriously not good enough, especially Scott's reading level, which was less than the other three's by about two grade levels.

Aside from working on their reading, Freedom also began to teach them math skills, which Dathe insisted would help them with magic. Shiloh, Harry and Scott for the life of them took to learning mathematical skills like fish to water, Helena on the other hand was a bit slower than the boys in that subject.

Teaching them foreign languages was shared between Freedom and Dathe, in attempt to lessen confusion, Dathe admitted to being half human, and being a half wolf-fox-ram cross spirit, but he told the kids to refer to his species as half-demon, as his own kind have called themselves...

But the one subject Freedom loved teaching was chemistry, because chemistry was the building block of everything else. Plus, teaching five-year olds the science behind Molotov cocktails and how to make explosives from scratch, Freedom viewed as an invaluable skill that would serve them later on in life.

As far as magical study went, Dathe gravitated between teaching them (including Freedom) about the magical world, and how to do magical control exercises. They were exhausting to all five, constantly depleting the magic that all of them had, only to have Dathe shove a magical replenisher pill down each of their throats and tell them to do it again.

Freedom never thought that the ever-smiling eerie man would be such a stickler for perfection.

Dathe even explained the concepts of elemental magic to them, such as the elemental alignment of their natural magic.

When they stopped in a small town in France, Dathe had already gathered up a plethora of required ingredients to complete several rituals he'd been explaining almost manically to Freedom halfway since Paris.

Things were great as far as trying to educate the kids, unfortunately, Dathe seemed to have a huge knack for pissing off French cooks.

Which got them kicked out of at least three restaurants...

Freedom had already ensured the silence of all four children regarding the 'Noodle Incident' and none of them would ever speak of it again...

OOOOO

In an Abandoned Quarry Near Carrara, Italy...

It was broad daylight, near the Apuan Alps, and the six of them were all standing in a quarry, with Freedom having set up several standing targets, and then she had Dathe use a sticking charm for higher targets.

"Okay brats," Freedom turned to face Harry, Helena, Shiloh and Scott. "What kind of firearms are you currently holding?"

"A handgun?" Offered Scott hopefully.

"Yeah, I know it's a handgun," Freedom hissed unemotionally, "but what model is it? Come on, I haven't had you all reading Firearms Care & Safety books for nothing have I?"

"These are all Walther," Helena started excitedly, coughing several times, "P22 Target Pistols."

"Caliber?" Freedom raised an eyebrow.

"Point twenty-two long rifle." Helena fired back with a smirk.

"Boys, she's making a mockery of you." Freedom deadpanned, "I thought males would take to this stuff quicker."

"Hey!" The three boys, and Dathe protested.

"What?" Freedom's deadpan face had a look of innocence on it.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Scott exclaimed indignantly.

"What?" Freedom asked flatly, "I deal with Dathe's sad corn-mummy jokes and I can't poke fun at you brats?"

Helena gave a snicker before coughing twice.

"Did you just tell a joke?" Harry asked, grin creeping onto his face.

"Back to the lesson," Freedom said quickly as the tell-tale tugging of a grin left her features entirely and she took on the persona of a moderately spoken drill sergeant, "those guns are not loaded. Check."

The children did, and found the guns to be empty.

Freedom smacked Harry upside the head, not nearly hard enough to hurt, just to smart a little.

"Hey! What was that for?" Harry rubbed his chin.

"For being stupid," Freedom declared plainly, "really loaded or not, you always treat a gun as if it's loaded and completely live. And you never, EVER, point it at yourself or anything that you ARE NOT prepared to shoot, unless you're using it for a bluff."

"Sorry Freedom..." Harry muttered apologetically.

"But it wasn't loaded," Scott said logically, "so what's the point?"

Freedom went quiet, and her expression looked so cold it was scary.

"I don't think you quite understand," Freedom drew her own handgun quietly, which everyone present knew was loaded, "here's what a gun can do."

BANG!

Before anyone knew what she was doing, Freedom had cocked the gun at her left palm and pulled the trigger, blowing a hole clean through her hand.

It bled.

The kids were, to say the least shocked.

Freedom's face contorted in pain for a few moments, before it seemed that she forced her expression into submission, and regained a façade of her composure.

"See this?" The brunette woman hissed unevenly as she thrust her bleeding hand close to Harry, Shiloh, Helena and Scott's faces, "this could be your head, or your leg, or your friend's various body parts. Worse, the bullet actually might get stuck," Freedom took a deep breath, "and then you got to pick it out."

"Must you do things like this?" Dathe sighed as he concentrated magically healing Freedom's hand while cradling it as gently as possible, "honestly, I'm starting to think you're a closet masochist..."

"Do you want a hole in your skull just because you 'thought it wasn't loaded'?" Freedom completely ignored the half-demon.

"And I'm obviously nothing more than a house plant." Dathe declared to no-one in particular.

"No." Scott said guiltily as he looked at his feet.

"Good, now what are the rules about keeping a gun?" Freedom looked back at Dathe to see that he was finished healing her hand, and she flexed her fingers experimentally. "Wow, they're good as new."

"Keep our fingers outside the trigger guard until we're ready to shoot," The four children said harmoniously, "always point the muzzle in a safe direction, be certain of the target and what's beyond it, and we treat every firearm as if it's loaded."

"Good." Freedom looked satisfied, if the twitching of the left corner of her mouth was anything to go by, "these are your magazines," Freedom held out the point 22 long rifle magazines out to the four, "you get one each, we go by order of height, each round has ten bullets. Each of you have to hit those targets, Scott, you first."

Scott nodded, loaded his gun, and aimed...

"No, you do not hold it sideways like that, that only applies to when you are trying to shoot while running." Freedom reprimanded Scott while correcting his stance. "Go gangsta on 'em when you can shoot the wings off of house flies."

Scott nodded, took the stance Freedom showed him, and fired his first shot...

BANG!

Harry, Helena, and Shiloh looked at all ten targets excitedly, there wasn't a mark on them. Freedom sighed inwardly, she realized for the enth-hundreth time that she had her work seriously cut out for her. Not only did she have to turn three five-year olds and a ten-year old into decent marksmen, but she also had to teach them life skills, social skills, espionage skills, she had to turn them into not just good soldiers, she had to turn them into the best.

Freedom realized that she had to attempt to cram every single last possible skill she knew anything about into their little heads without

completely traumatizing them, and... She had to mold them into intelligent people before society officially started dumbing them down...

Then there was a plethora of other things that she had left to teach them... In other words, Freedom was seriously feeling the pressure of the responsibility, quietly of course.

And Helena coughed again, Freedom realized that whatever the problem was it had to be taken care of immediately. Freedom had already discussed it with Dathe, and he promised to do a thorough check-up on the white-haired child when they found the time.

"You call that shooting?" Dathe quipped jokingly, "my dead aunt could shoot better than you, and she doesn't even have thumbs."

"Here," Freedom said, taking out what seemed to be a roll of packing tape from her backpack, "do us all a favor, if you have nothing helpful to say then please use this tape to remind yourself to say nothing."

"Okay, okay, jeesh..." Dathe giggled childishly, "tough crowd."

So Freedom sighed, the left side of her mouth twitching slightly...

"Keep shooting Wolfie," Freedom gave Scott a gentle look as she spoke, "keep shooting, and use your sights this time."

Scott blushed with and turned back at the targets...

BANG!

And missed again.

"You got your work cut out for ya, huh Freed?" Dathe patted the woman's shoulder comfortingly, ignoring her startled twitch.

"It's Derricks, and don't remind me." Freedom deadpanned, then had a dead seagull fall on her head from the sky...

...

Scott had the gun pointed to the sky...

Dathe, Shiloh and Harry laughed at Freedom's expression, and Helena giggled softly, inter-punctuated by her increasingly frequent coughing...

Ah yes, they were all having their humors affected in slightly morbid ways...

But as long as it was kept under control, Freedom found herself okay with that...

Freedom sighed mentally as Scott missed the target again, this was going to be a looooong day...

A/N: Okay finally, I finally finished the chapter. Yeah, it was a filler, I'm trying to type as fast as I can, I have a C in math! YAYYYYYY! Okay, I just started watching the new AMC series, 'The Walking Dead' it was pretty cool, finally a TV show of a zombie outbreak thingie... I will do a Halloween chapter, but it'll be late... Anyways, PLEASE REVIEW! I want to know what you guys think! (And if you even think of flaming me without making it constructive criticism, hit the dang back button and get your sorry butt outta here!) Anyways, REVIEW! Happy Halloween! Night ya'll! =)

EXPLANATIONS/s:

Maugrim Dathe is half 'demon', to most humans, while I may use the term, he is not an actual demon, his Mother's species just call themselves that. He's actually, as previously mentioned part nature 'spirit'. Not spirit, as in ghost or ethereal being, just a type of energy being.

Freedom Derricks is descended from a Grizzly bear totem, they exist on an energy plane, and the really powerful or lucky ones can take a physical form, thus being labeled as totems by human beings. There are other animals too, but thus far Freedom is the only known descendant at the moment with a base human form.

(In cheesy announcer voice): What will happen next? Will the kids ever learn how to shoot? OMGosh Freedom is starting to show emotions? And why is Helena coughing so much? Find out next time in the 'Maelstrom Twins'!

Chapter 41: Christmas Chronicles: Of Meditations & A Little Friendship

"Meditating." Freedom said as she sat down on the mat that Dathe had produced almost out of nowhere.

They were in the middle of a rather small, wooded area located in Italy in an undisclosed location. Dathe had put up a subtle people-repelling charm around the perimeter of the area, for security reasons of course.

"Yep." The horribly scarred young man chirped back, sitting down onto the snow covered ground of the clearing they were in, removing his orange hightop sneakers in the process and tossing them aside.

"Why?" Questioned Helena curiously.

"To find your inner animals, organize your minds and work on your magical control, d- d- d- duuuh!" Dathe said, purposefully stuttering, like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

"You mean like turning int'a animals like Uncle Sirius?" Harry blurted.

"The proper term for witches and wizards is Animagi, plural or Animagus, singular." Dathe cited quickly before gracefully shifting into a lotus position.

"Can't we just use a potion for it?" Helena asked, remembering that one paragraph she'd found in, 'Journey of an Animagus', while digging through the Potter Manor library.

"Never!" Dathe cried vehemently, "that just makes your animal more difficult to deal with when you meet them, humans... Honestly."

"Hey Teach, I have a por-, pertinent question," said Scott as he stumbled a bit on one of his new vocabulary words, "what about those who can already turn into animals?"

"You're a true Werewolf, you just need to practice transforming and exercise a lot." Dathe said seriously before turning to face Shiloh, "and you my friend, are half-demon like me, you don't have an animal form. You have a form determined by your demonic ancestry, which is most likely something from your Mother's side if my sense

of smell hasn't dulled over the past five hundred odd years. You smell isn't very distinct, but I can definitely smell kitsune, some sort of water spirit... Fire sprite? How'd that get in there?"

Dathe's voice trailed off into thoughtful mumbling, his new 'students' stared at the man expectantly, then the scarred man sighed suddenly.

"But you won't have any fire aligned affinity, that's for sure, water is far more predominant in you, so you'll probably specialize in water and then ice... Fire spells are okay for you, but just don't hope for too much in that area 'kay kid?" Dathe finished quickly, looking at the nodding Shiloh.

"You do know that I have no idea of what's going on here right?" Freedom groused flatly.

"A fire sprite is a magical being related to High Elves, Fairies and somewhat likened to spirits," Dathe explained patiently, "Shiloh here, has, somewhere in his ancestry, water spirit and fire sprite blood along with his 'demonic' blood as well, nice combo kid."

"Why are our powers not working too good like before?" Harry questioned suddenly, remembering the nagging question that he and his sister had been wondering since the circus where they met Scott.

"Cause that was just the initial burst, you guys had a lot of suppressed energy, therefore it was only natural that it was more powerful than what it would be naturally at your development." Dathe explained with a slight grin, "but don't worry! With my training schedule, you'll be powerful sorcerers yet!"

Everyone, except Dathe of course, groaned both audibly (and silently in Freedom's case). They knew what that meant, that meant drills. Drills, drills, and even more magical control drills...

It was times like this that the four children observed that Dathe was like Freedom in several ways, at least in the teaching department.

Though he emoted much more than Freedom did... A lot...

"Okay, take deep breaths..." Dathe instructed calmly, falling into a lotus position easily.

Freedom breathed easily, focusing her thoughts on attempting to achieve a blissful blankness... A peace...

And oddly, surrounded by the gentle lull of nature, and the four children that... She was starting to view as almost... Her own...

Freedom's mind found an unforced peace...

OOOOOO

The kids had finished their magical and physical drills of the day, and the animals had their training sessions as well as per Freedom's requirements. They were currently playing a friendly game of tag in a snow-covered park in the center of the town they were staying in.

As odd as it sounded, despite being raised in the unforgiving environment of working for Crytex, the one holiday that she observed, even if only in her own mind, was Christmas...

Christmas lights adorning the streets outside of their motel room...

'Christmas!' Freedom remembered suddenly, the one holiday she would make an actual note of, the only holiday she observed really...

The kids they... Needed a Christmas...

How was she going to do this?

What traditions-?

"Freedom?" Dathe's voice jolted the stoic brunette out of her thoughts, startling her thoroughly.

"It's Derricks, Dathe," Freedom corrected Dathe offhandedly for the umpteenth time, "also, what do you want now?"

"Penny for your thoughts?" Dathe smiled hopefully.

"My thoughts aren't that cheap." Freedom felt a smirk pulling at the corner of her mouth.

"A buck fifty then." Dathe responded giving the bespectacled brunette a full smile.

"Why are you using American currency?" Freedom bantered back, almost playfully as the left corner of her mouth curled upwards into a little grin, "we're in Europe."

"Well put, my dear lady, well put." Dathe gave a playful shove to her shoulder, "but seriously, something's bugging you, what is it?"

Freedom raised an eyebrow at the man, before sighing.

"Several things, first there are the obvious things, like our continued safety, the kid's training, their mental welfare, and the preservation of their sanity, giving the kids a proper Christmas, figuring out how to kill my former student so he doesn't kill us-" Freedom listed off the things on her mind one by one, before being interrupted by Dathe, predictably.

"Giving the kids a proper Christmas?" Dathe sounded very surprised, "I never pegged you as a holiday observer Freedom."

"It's Derricks," Freedom corrected once again, "and it's not every holiday, just this one, and yeah I know it's weird but-"

"It's alright," Dathe cut her off again with an easy smile, "it's just one of those things, and you can count me in on this holiday madness!"

Freedom stared at the smiling man that she had only known for a mere month oddly, and voiced the burning question in her mind, suddenly wondering when she had started opening up to him and those kids since they had exploded into her life.

"You're not going to ask me details?" Freedom asked incredulously, "you're not going to pressure me into telling you why Christmas is the one holiday that I try to observe, an almost military-oriented person like me? You're not going to ask why I accepted magic so easily? Or-"

"No," Dathe interrupted Freedom's beginning of a ramble, "if you want to share, that's fine, but even I can tell that it's personal. I won't put you through that kind of discomfort, and for as short of a time that I've known you, I consider you a friend, and it's not for 'your own good', so take your time."

Freedom opened her mouth to say something, but then Dathe spoke again.

"And besides, you were about to start rambling," he tapped her trench coat jacket sleeve just above her wrist twice with a grin, "so what do ya say? Are we gonna do this Christmas thing or not?"

"Help," Freedom paused slightly, "would be appreciated."

"Alright!" Dathe suddenly launched off the park bench they'd been sitting on and pumped his right fist enthusiastically, "let's do this thing!"

"I didn't mean right n-" Freedom started before being cut off as she was jerked out of her seat by an enthusiastic half-demon by her right wrist and half-dragged towards the car.

"KIDS!" Dathe called out to the four children playing with Garren and Rouge, and to a perched Aisu, "get in the car we got some shopping to do!"

They children came running, followed by loyal Garren, a shivering Rouge, and a Disillusioned Aisu.

Yeah, Freedom really did wonder when these kids had started to worm their way into her being, or how Shiloh's constant sayings of 'you're different' had driven her to stage an escape from the facility, or even how these kids and that insufferable man Dathe, were able to make her even crack the beginnings of a grin.

Freedom was sure that, it was against all logic really, if she'd done the smart thing, she would've dropped the kids off at an Orphanage, left Dathe in the county jail, and left for another continent. But she didn't, she kept the kids with her, bailed Dathe out of jail, and what's more she even took the kids on as her students.

She'd only had a total of two students in her entire life, one was dead, and the other was currently trying to kill them!

Freedom barely knew these kids, and Dathe, she hadn't even know them for a year yet! But...

Freedom couldn't shake the feeling that, if given time, she really could trust them. Or that sense of safety, or at least the lessened urge to check over her own shoulder all the time.

Freedom sighed as she pulled out of the parking lot, things were so much simpler back when emotions and social interaction wasn't involved...

"So we're really going to celebrate Christmas?" Harry seemed to bounce on the car seat with barely contained excitement.

"Yeah, are we?" Scott and Helena chipped in.

"We sure are." Dathe smiled at them from the front row passenger's seat.

"Alright!" Scott and Shiloh cheered.

Helena smiled soundly as her little brother punched the air dramatically.

'Maybe the internal confusion's worth it...' Freedom thought breezily.

Then the car almost swerved, as Freedom was glomped by an overenthusiastic Dathe.

"Let go of me you idiot!" Freedom shouted as she tried to steer and pry the smiling fool that was Maugrim Dathe off of her, whose hugs she came to find, were akin to a barnacle's grip. Freedom didn't even notice her own outward expression, or the fact that she was outwardly emoting.

"You're the best friend ever!" Dathe chirped happily.

"Let go of me so we all don't die!" Freedom griped at him as he continued to hug her tighter.

"Awww!" Dathe cooed cheerily, "you know you wub me!"

"I know, that I don't want to have glass in my face and metal crushing my legs, so let go!" Freedom's newfound peace had been replaced with what seemed like an understanding sort of irate annoyance.

"Okay," Dathe let go, then smirked as he said, "man, you're so adorable when you're mad."

The kids were snickering a little too, unaware of how they could have all crashed and died horribly in the accident...

But all negativities aside...

Freedom sighed, did civilians have to put up with people like Dathe every day?

Dathe was telling the kids a knock-knock joke right then...

It was corny, but still kind of funny...

Maybe dealing with people, wouldn't be so bad...

Freedom regained her composure quickly as they drove onward to the shopping center of the city, the place where most of all the stores were located.

But secretly, Freedom allowed herself a little smile...

And mentally promised Harry, Helena, Scott, Shiloh, and even Dathe, this would be a Merry Christmas, for all of them...

Now she just had to deliver...

Then Dathe glomped her randomly again.

"Dammit are you trying to send us to an early grave?" Freedom reprimanded the scarred man irately.

"But you look so huggable when you're all determined and serious!" Dathe laughed.

"Let go of me you idiot!"

A/N: Yeah, Merry Almost-Christmas you guys, I think I'll actually try for a Christmas special in this fanfic, though depending on the progress of my cold and sore throat it might be a little late. I promise that I'll try to have the Christmas chaps out as soon as possible. Also, yeah, the Christmas thing is part of my plot, it's a major character development for the characters. Do you like the Dathe and Freedom interaction there? Just so you all don't get your hopes up, at the moment, there is no romantic plan for them, I prefer them to NOT be a couple for a reason that I can't disclose without giving you guys major spoilers.

As far as Freedom, yeah there are OTHER reasons that she accepted the existence of magic so easily, and it's not because of that she knew about it already. She thought that it was psychic energy, or something, but other than that I'll leave it a mystery 'til later of course...

I'm trying to be organized, I wanted to update ALL my In-Progress fanfics at least once before Christmas or at least before the year ends. But I think I'll only get to a few, but I swear that I will do the Christmas chapters for this fic even if it kills me! If I don't seem too full of Christmas spirit in my notes or my writing, then well, I'll be honest, it doesn't really feel like Christmas this year to me. Neither was last year, but I promise to try for all of my faithful readers and reviewers out there.

Merry Christmas and please review!

Chapter 42: Christmas Chronicles: Christmas Lights

"Shut up, please." Freedom said as she was momentarily regretting ever telling the hyper-active hanyou about her plan for the holiday.

"But you care ab- ooooouuuut them don't you?" Dathe smiled knowingly, a mischievous glint glittering in his otherwise murky-green eyes. "I knew there was emotion in there!"

"I have emotions," Freedom deadpanned plainly, "it is impossible for any sentient being that I know of to have entirely no emotions whatsoever, unless they physically breed out the parts of the brain that create those chemicals, and even the greatest Crytex scientists would be hard-pressed to churn that out."

"I'm hearing a 'but' coming up in your next statement." Dathe commented dryly.

"But," Freedom glared for one moment at Dathe as she spoke evenly, "I do not understand how emotions can compromise or wrongly influence perfectly good logic. I am not giving them a holiday for something so petty as it is a holiday, but for their own mental and emotional growth, which shall serve them well in the majorly fucked up future I just know that fate'll toss our way."

"You know just how to set up a holiday mood don't cha?" Dathe sighed lightly, then smirked as if he knew something Freedom didn't.

"Here's the store," Freedom parked the car in front of the mall, "give the kids a wake-up poke."

"It's not gon' be a sur- prise?" Dathe said childishly as he seemed to start bouncing in his seat.

"It's enough that we're here in the first place, now," Freedom spoke flatly, "wake 'em up before I change my-"

"Man you guys ar' loud." Scott mumbled as he rubbed the sleep out of his eyes.

"Merry Christmas," Freedom said monotonously, "you guys can pick one, portable thing each from the stores we go to, and then we leave."

"Woooooowww," Dathe rolled his eyes, "way to be festive."

Freedom ignored him as she made sure that the animals wouldn't overheat in the car.

"Freedom, what's por- ta-ble?" Shiloh asked curiously.

"It means, something easily carried or moved. So nothing big okay?" Freedom answered with a lighter tone.

"Okay." The kids chorused.

"I have a spell for that," Dathe piped up, "just open the windows and leave the rest to me."

Freedom nodded, seemingly forgetful of her brief annoyance.

"Go ahead." Then Freedom looked back at Garren and Rogue, "you sure we can leave them in a car without killing each other?"

"Typical misconception, probably yeah." Dathe answered lightly magic humming in the air briefly.

"Nevermind." Freedom said mostly to herself, before turning around to face the animals before saying, "don't kill each other, 'cause this is not our car."

Freedom briefly felt like an idiot for speaking to them as if they could understand her, but often-times, she found that some animals were smarter than people gave them credit for.

So with that said, they made their way into the mall...

'Oh God,' thought Freedom wearily, 'is that a fruit cake?'

"FRUIT CAKE!" Dathe literally pranced through the store entrance with childish exuberance.

'This is going to be a long day...'

"We wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS! We wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS! We wish you-" Dathe started singing, entirely off-key,

before slinging an arm around Freedom causing her to tense briefly at the sudden contact, "come on Freedom, sing with me!"

Somehow, Dathe ended up starting a store-wide Christmas carol, including the kids.

'Correction,' Freedom thought as she gave up trying to escape the clearly deranged man's hug-of-inescapable-DOOM, 'this is going to be a very, very, very looooooonng day...'

"Oh, bring us a figgy pudding,

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding,

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding and a CUP OF GOOD CHEEEEEEEEERRRRRR!"

'I'm going to need an aspirin after this...'

OOOOO

The rest of the trip was, as reluctant as Freedom was to admit it, quite fun.

She had never really interacted with people on a personal basis, not even with the two Crytex students she'd trained. Freedom had hardly ever interacted with anybody without an ulterior motive, plans of manipulation or weaseling information out of them without the person's knowledge.

Freedom felt small tug in her chest as she watched the children trying to decide what they wanted to get.

'Maybe I should give them a proper Christmas someday...'

...

Where the hell did that thought come from?

Freedom's mouth twitched downward for a momentary frown, then shifted into her civilian persona.

Scott had decided on getting a hooded bomber jacket, Shiloh had picked out a plain red yo-yo, Harry had decided on a rabbit plushie, to replace his old stuffed animal lost in a fire. Helena had chosen... Nothing?

"Kid, don't you want anything?" Dathe asked the white-haired child.

"Can stop by that antique shop tha' we passed?" Helena asked Freedom, looking up at her.

"Sure, but it's the last, -fun- stop." Freedom answered, giving a practiced nod.

Helena nodded, then fast-walked toward her where her brother and Shiloh were standing.

Freedom had already begun to steel her will once more, for soon, there would be no going back...

She would turn these children into soldiers...

But for now, she was content to watch...

'Laughter,' Freedom thought, 'what a beautiful sound.'

OOOOO

Freedom had conceded to exposing the children to culture, and decided on something simple.

They they'd gone to see the giant Christmas tree in the near-center of town, there were lots of people there, and it had begun to snow.

The lights, the sounds, the vendors...

It reminded Freedom of a faded memory from what felt like forever ago...

"I'll be home for Christmas..."

You can count on me,

Please have snow and mistletoe,

And presents under the tree- ee-eee..." Freedom mumbled softly, her voice over-powered by the sheer amount of white-noise in the background.

"Christmas ever will find you, where the love light gleams..." Dathe sang next to her, grinning non-eerily for once.

"I'll be home for Christmas," Scott joined in sporting his new bomber jacket.

"If only in our dreeeeamsss..." They all sang, together.

And Freedom didn't know why, but...

She could remember a man, with soft brown eyes picking her up and carrying her on his shoulders, singing as the caroled down the street...

For a moment, Freedom felt a real smile creep up onto her features, and for a while, she let it be.

And watched as the Christmas lights seemed to dance before her eyes...

OOOOO

That Night...

They were on the road again, and they'd switched cars once more, Dathe conveniently cleaning the left-behind vehicle of any and all fingerprints and traces of DNA.

They'd stopped by the antique store, and lo and behold Helena had picked a soft, not-so-old-fashioned teddy bear.

They'd all stopped for dinner and a small diner on the way, and gotten a little candy on the way to the car before they went on their way.

Dathe was becoming more and more useful already.

"Derricks?" Dathe's voice garnered the brunette's attention and she flicked her eyes at him once in acknowledgement.

"We have a problem." The man said quietly.

"What kind of problem," Freedom asked in a dangerously low tone, "and why haven't we discussed it yet?"

"I wanted to wait until the kids couldn't hear." Dathe answered the woman calmly.

"Well what is it?" Freedom questioned in a business-like tone.

"It's about Helena..."

A/N: Yep, I am officially EBIL for cutting it off there, but it was a perfect place to stop. Yeah, I know, uber-horrible for not updating in forever, but the good news is I finished one of my other fanfics, and I have a B in my Pre-Calculus class, which means I have more time for writing! This update was finally spurred by watching both 'Kick Ass' and 'Hanna', two of the most bad-ass movies EVUH! Please REVIEW! TY! ;P

Chp44